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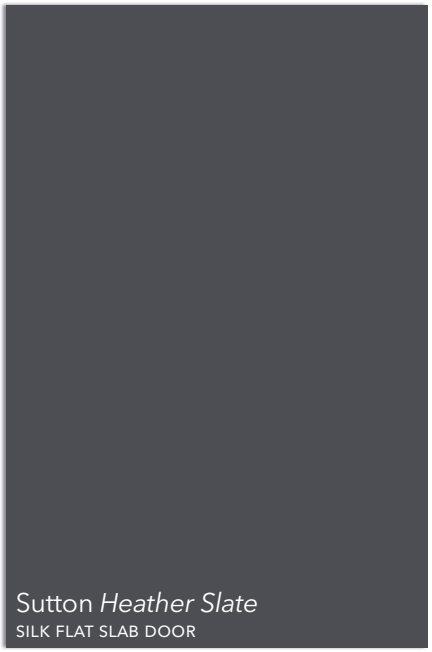
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Five months ago, the May issue of the magazine carried news of all the exhibitors and experts you could expect to see at Grand Designs Live London, along with your free ticket to the show. There was no way we could have imagined what was about to happen, and that the event would have to be postponed and postponed, again. With restrictions on the numbers of people that can gather in one place due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the large-scale events industry had effectively been put on hold.

But I am delighted to tell you that Grand Designs Live is now scheduled to go ahead next year, from 1-9 May 2021 at London's ExCel venue. And there's more good news. Any ticket, whether free or paid-for, for the original dates will be accepted on the door in May 2021. Look out for more chances to obtain a free ticket in future editions of the magazine, along with details of the expert speakers, fascinating features, in-depth advice and fantastic exhibitors that you can look forward to seeing. I promise you, it will be well worth waiting for!



KAREN STYLIANIDES, EDITOR
@StylianidesK



COVER PHOTO
DEREK SWALWELL



To see more of this cleverly extended single-storey home, turn to page 79

PHOTOGRAPHY DEREK SWALWELL

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Architecture update

Original projects to inspire your own self-build or renovation



Keeping a low profile

Looking like a toppled skyscraper, Invisible House in California by Tomas Osinski has been designed to reflect its desert surroundings. To keep a comfortable interior temperature, the architect sited the building behind a hill to protect it from the sun, and opted for coated Solarcool glass and a cool-roof system that bounces back more light than it absorbs. Should the owners Roberta and Chris Hanley – a film producer – still feel hot under the collar, a 30m-long swimming pool runs through the 500sqm property. (tomasosinski.com)



Astronomical conversion

A Moroccan riad is the inspiration of Villa Stardust in Rotterdam, Netherlands, a former commercial space transformed by architect MVRDV into a family home centred around a 230sqm garden – from which to view the stars. The single-level living areas face the garden and, thanks to this, gain plenty of natural light. But it's the outdoor space that is the main focus, with its terracotta tiles and pond. 'By using a quiet colour palette with a few Mediterranean accents, we created a sunny atmosphere,' says Fokke Moerel, a partner at MVRDV. (mvrdv.nl)



House proud

Even the most ostentatious American homes follow the rule that form follows function, yet its greatest architectural triumphs edge into the experimental, as *The Iconic American House* (£50) by Dominic Bradbury reveals. The US benefitted hugely from a European influx in the 1930s, which makes its iconic properties a true melting pot of concepts. (thamesandhudson.com) »

Architecture update

Launching this month, the Government's £2 billion Green Deal is a home-improvement scheme that could help hundreds of thousands upgrade their properties to become more energy-efficient. The Government will pay at least two-thirds of costs, with poorer households receiving up to £10,000. Check online to see if your house could benefit. (gov.uk/green-deal-energy-saving-measures)



Home-office appointment

If during lockdown you discovered that working from home was to your taste, consider clearing the kitchen table and investing in a Study Box, a prefab space conceived by architect Box 9 Design and tiles specialist Bert & May. British made, Study Box measures 3.4x3.4x2.5m, but there are three larger models, with the Two Bed Box offering the most ample dimensions at 17.8x4.2x3.4m. Each SIPs structure has internal and external wood cladding, aluminium-framed double-glazed windows and Bert & May's encaustic floor tiles. From £33,000. (bertsbox.co.uk)

Nature watch

Bare concrete and glass are the basis of Casa Castaños, a new-build, 236sqm, three-bedroom home near Buenos Aires, Argentina, by architects Ekaterina Künzel and María Belén García Bottazzini. As the site lacks greenery, the decision was taken to bring a hint of nature into the house itself. A central courtyard faced by the main living area will have its own vegetation, including a jacaranda tree. It's little more than a sapling at the moment, but this deciduous planting will grow through the home and eventually provide cover from summer sunshine and allow light to filter through in winter. (ekaterinakunzel.com)





Different strokes

Situated in the Somerset countryside, planning permission for Heatherton Hall by architect Thread took five years due to its open location and unusual mixed-use purpose. This former steel-frame barn dating from the 1950s is now the home, studios and workshops of a fine art restorer, whose brief was to keep the aesthetic simple but to bring in lots of light and warmth. A new first floor has been included, which has become a loft apartment. Inside there are polished concrete floors, exposed steel and plywood, while the exterior is a blend of glazing and timber cladding. (a-thread.co.uk)

WORDS LEE GALE PHOTOGRAPHY NICK DEARDEN, CHRIS HANLEY, DARIA SCAGLIOLA, DANIELA MAC ADDEN

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Kevin McCloud

Our perception of threat is greater than the sum of the real risks, except during a pandemic, says our editor-at-large



I don't know about you but lockdown shifted my focus. I'm used to working and living outdoors but much of the past three months has been spent wondering what hall carpet to put down, re-hanging pictures in different rooms and staring at the fall of sunlight on a bookshelf. Home has become a safety bubble with elaborate disinfection processes for hands, food, post and shoes. Comfort of mind and safety of body has only been made possible with a store of alcohol gel, anti-viral sprays, wipes, gloves and masks... PPE has its own kitchen drawer now. Benzalkonium chloride has become a tangible balm for the soul.

The threat of epidemic and the potential risks to our health and lives put me in mind of a time 20 years ago when I learned to climb for the first time in order to make a series about tall buildings. I was a novice with a fear of heights but my instructor, Ru, coaxed me gently up six-foot walls and down church towers before abseiling with me, at the end of the first week, over a 300-foot cliff. His constant gentle reassurance powerfully worked away at my less than rational fears and his training left a couple of indelible ideas in my head. The first is trust your equipment. Climbing kit is amazingly well-designed, super-strong and completely reliable, just as a bicycle is well-built and dependable. The second is that by pushing physically at the world and trying new challenges, it's possible to remain mentally – as well as physically – supple, and for your horizons to increase, not decrease, with the passing of the years. Together these ideas remind me that, even though fear will grow if left unchecked, it can be challenged and beaten by the reliability of experience and the tangible.

So, buildings and bookshelves generally stay up. Bicycles stop when you apply the brakes going downhill. The laws of mechanics and physics always work in our universe, even when you stupidly remove the brakes, cut the rope or unscrew the bookshelf. The experience of dependability reassures us. Until March when it all went topsy-turvy. The past months seem to have upset our innate ability to assess risk in our personal world and distorted our judgement about what action to take to manage or even avoid it altogether.

Think of your risk-management faculty – I'm quoting Ru here – as two bubbles, one inside the other. The smaller of the two is your comfort zone. The larger bubble is the safety zone. For normal, reasonably fit, well-adjusted people the comfort bubble is always smaller than the safety bubble, which gives us a reasonable amount of leeway to adapt quickly to new situations, flee sabre-toothed tigers, experiment with »

'Alcohol gel, wipes, gloves and masks... PPE has its own kitchen drawer now'



By trying new challenges, it's possible to remain mentally, as well as physically, supple

18+

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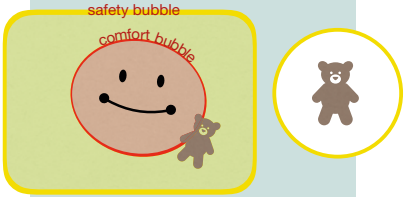
We're all different, of course, and some of us are more risk averse than others. Young men between the age of 14 and 30 have such underdeveloped risk-management skills they like to jump out of planes and drive cars at 130mph just to get to a chilli-eating contest. This explains the insurance premiums for first-time male drivers.

At the other end of the scale, as we get weaker with age or infirmity, the comfort bubble shrinks. It gets soft and wrinkled like we do. We learn that when we overexert ourselves there's a penalty; when we fall, it takes longer for bones to mend. The fear of pain drives us from the physical adventure and our perception of threat is greater than the sum of the real risks and excitement that we would have embraced in our youth. But as Ru says, the truth is we could and should still engage in as many challenges as possible as we get older because although our comfort bubble shrinks with time, our safety bubble shrinks far less. If you're healthy, it's usually perfectly safe to abseil into your sixties, or nineties, even. In fact, a way of fighting age is to go out and find new activities, stretch your mind and your body with new challenges and expand your comfort bubble again. Ru would often tell me this and then remind me of the inexorable alternative, which is a comfort bubble no larger than a PVC wing-backed chair.

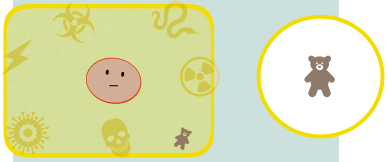
But Ru's argument doesn't account for pandemics. It's as though Covid-19 has switched off the mental instruments with which we daily tune our risk assessment. As never before, our safety bubbles have shrunk and yet, for many, our comfort bubbles have remained the same size. In the face of a lethal virus that is eager to spread itself, people are happy to gather in pubs, fly on holiday again and socialise normally. Our powerful social drives and our ingrained behaviours swamp our rational understanding of the need for social distancing or any other precautions. We persuade ourselves that things seem normal, feel safe and that our behaviour should adapt to its old patterns, all because we can't see this danger. It's not tangible or experiential. It is not a frayed rope or a broken shelf bracket. Its threat is abstract and for those of us who have not lost loved ones, our experience of it is limited to being furloughed or home-schooled. Maybe washing our post.

If you're in your teens or twenties, the threat of infection carries a lower risk, to the extent that you can freely socialise without fear of danger to life and limb. All my local pubs seem to hold a chilli-eating contest every night of the week now. But there is another constituency in our population: we people who are older and quieter, maybe weaker and frailer, who still find safety in the four walls of our homes, who fear the oncoming winter and the ills it brings and who wonder how we can enlarge our physical safety zones by making ourselves fitter and more resilient. And wonder how we can expand our comfort zones too, in the face of the advancing PVC wing-backed chair. I'm 61 and I'm still climbing, but that chair has just appeared as a small dot over the horizon. GD

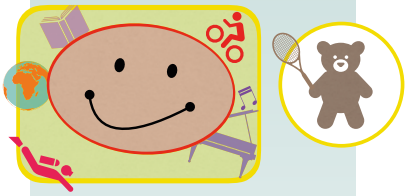
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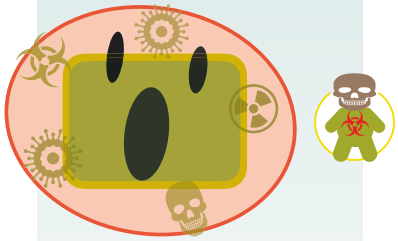
When well adjusted, our comfort bubble sits well within our safety bubble.



As we get older or weaker, our comfort bubble shrinks as imaginary threats crowd us. The safety bubble usually shrinks only slightly.



We can fight this with activities and new pursuits that stretch our comfort bubble but are still mainly safe.



Invisible threats can mislead our risk aversion. Covid has led to a major shrinking of the safety bubble.

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Richard Bennett and Felicia Böhm converted an underground reservoir into a light and airy home

PHOTOGRAPHY BROOK ANDERSON, ANDY HASLAM ILLUSTRATION KEVIN McCLOUD

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IN BRIEF

LOCATION Broadstairs, Kent
PROPERTY Detached replacement house
BEDROOMS 4
PROJECT STARTED March 2019
PROJECT FINISHED December 2019
SIZE 251sqm
LAND COST £455,000
BUILD COST £470,000
CURRENT VALUE £1.2 million

This home's larch and brick exterior is easy to maintain. A basket-weave pattern accent adds a textural element to the brickwork

The secret place

A gardener's cottage has been rebuilt to provide one beach-loving family with a secluded home on the coast

WORDS **CAROLINE FOSTER**
PHOTOGRAPHY **CHRIS SNOOK**



Property developers and designers Teresa and Anthony Ralph have cultivated a talent for finding rare and special building plots in great locations. So when the North Foreland Estate in Broadstairs, Kent, put four acres of its land up for sale, the couple leapt at the chance to take a look. 'We were drawn to a cottage that had been home to the estate's gardener. Tucked away in the grounds it felt quite magical, and we wanted to keep that sense of it being a secret house,' Anthony explains.

The couple planned to extend the cottage, which is on a 25x60-metre plot, to create their family home and build another house on the site for a holiday let. 'We applied for planning permission for the two projects but the application was initially refused. Our strategy was to reapply for the renovation of the cottage only, which went through without any issues,' Anthony says. 'At the same time, we lodged an appeal regarding the new-build and that was approved 16 weeks later. We were able to start work on the cottage without delay and just had to wait awhile for the consent we originally wanted.'

As the site is on the coast, Teresa, 50, and Anthony, 44, needed a family-friendly home with hard-wearing interiors and exteriors that could cope with the comings and goings of beach life and their children Zachary, 14, and Scarlett, 13. They also wanted to create somewhere to enjoy moments of solitude. 'We intended to renovate and extend the cottage but it became clear that this just wasn't feasible due to its poor construction,' says Anthony. 'In the end, only a single wall remained from the original building.' »



RIGHT The open-plan kitchen/diner has a bench attached to the island, which maximises the number of guests that can be seated in the space

BELOW A bright yellow front door and window frame contrasts with the black finish on the larch-clad exterior





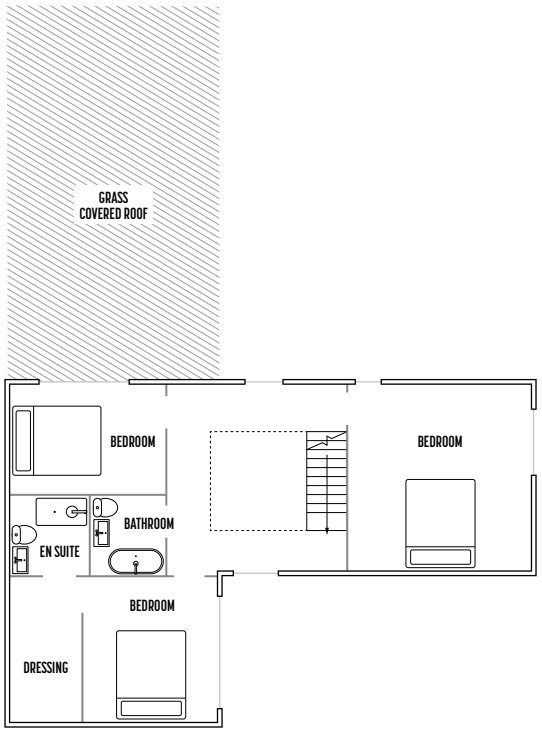
Teresa and Anthony needed a family-friendly home with hard-wearing interiors



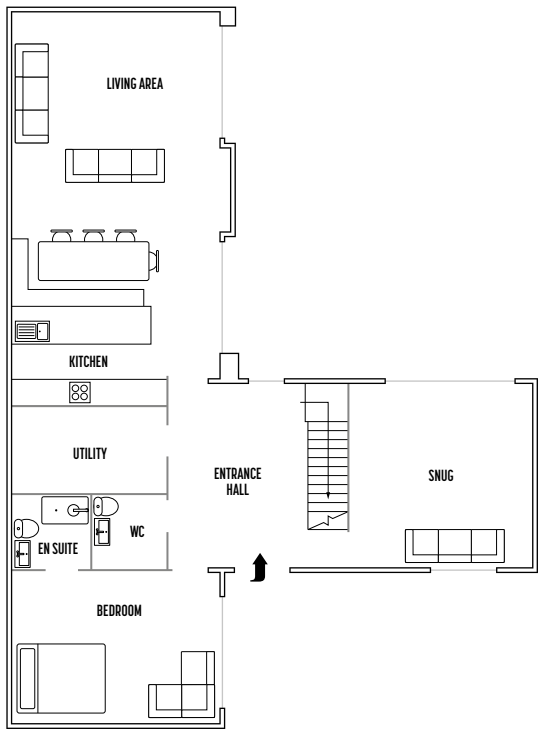
Sumptuous velvet sofas and brass light fittings add warmth to the sleek materials palette of polished concrete and plywood in the living area



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FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



A bespoke plywood staircase includes hooks for coats and a wellington boot station in the space beneath

One important aspect of the house's design was to create a relationship with the historic North Foreland Lighthouse and to have beautiful snapshots of the tower from the windows and seating areas both inside and out.

'We may not have sea views, but the lighthouse always reminds us that we're on the coast,' Anthony says. 'This design gave us a 260 square metre home with four bedrooms, adaptable living spaces and a tranquil garden secluded behind a private gate.'

Part of the house is clad with timber boards and includes the living room, staircase and upstairs bedroom. This two-storey section takes up the footprint of the original cottage that it replaced. 'It's a traditional block and brick build with flat roofs, which kept the foundations for that part of the house quite simple, as opposed to complex piling,' explains Anthony, 'The single-storey extension was built around a timber frame to give us the contemporary style we love.'

The exterior is notable for its textural contrasts, which stand out against the building's striking dark silhouette. The larch wood strips have a sleek black finish and a portion of the extension's dark-hued engineered brick walls are laid in an eye-catching pattern. 'We chose a bold colour in the form of the yellow powder-coated »



RIGHT A countertop basin sits on a small shelf and recessed shelves provide space-saving storage in the downstairs loo



aluminium frame for the upper front bedroom window, which matches the front door,' Anthony says. 'The black exterior seemed a natural choice to us because it highlights the beauty of the abundant greenery that surrounds the house and also helps the building to blend into the background, so we feel it's not a harsh colour choice as some might think.'

To further integrate their home into the landscape, the couple laid the driveway with recycled plastic paving grids and planted them with soil and grass seed, which will eventually provide a hardstanding that looks more like a lawn but is supremely durable. The rear garden is enclosed by the larch and brick walls which absorb sound and help to create a secluded and peaceful outdoor living area.

Inside, the interior design was driven by Teresa and Anthony's preference for minimalism and simplicity. 'The concrete and plywood surfaces are in keeping with the pared-back, modern look of the exterior,' Anthony explains. 'But we also wanted the rooms to feel welcoming, a little bit edgy, and they had to be hard-wearing.' Accent colours and soft textures were added to the scheme through the furnishings and paint shades.

For Anthony, the strength of the design begins at the front hallway, which opens up to an impressive galleried landing. 'There's plenty of space and light from the moment you walk through the door,' he says. 'I'd advocate sacrificing an extra bedroom to gain a big entrance with extra head height and a feeling of space.'



LEFT AND BELOW
This bedroom on the ground floor has a pull-down bed, a hidden desk space and a cinema screen that can be dropped down and doubles as a blackout blind. A projector is behind an automatic flap in the plywood wall

One aspect of the build caused the couple to go over their budget, but they have no regrets. 'I've long admired the work of architect Carl Trenfield, which I feel are things of great beauty. I asked him to design a staircase for the house,' Anthony says. 'I love working with people who are passionate about design and I would say the bespoke staircase is the most successful element in the house.'

For those contemplating a self-build project, Teresa and Anthony suggest going back to basics to understand what you want to achieve before submitting an application. 'Finding a beautiful plot brings a responsibility to come up with a design that works well,' Anthony says. 'With our house, the lines, space and quietness all work together to create a home that can cope with a beach-loving family.' GD

'The concrete and plywood surfaces are in keeping with the pared-back, modern look of the exterior'





SUPPLIERS

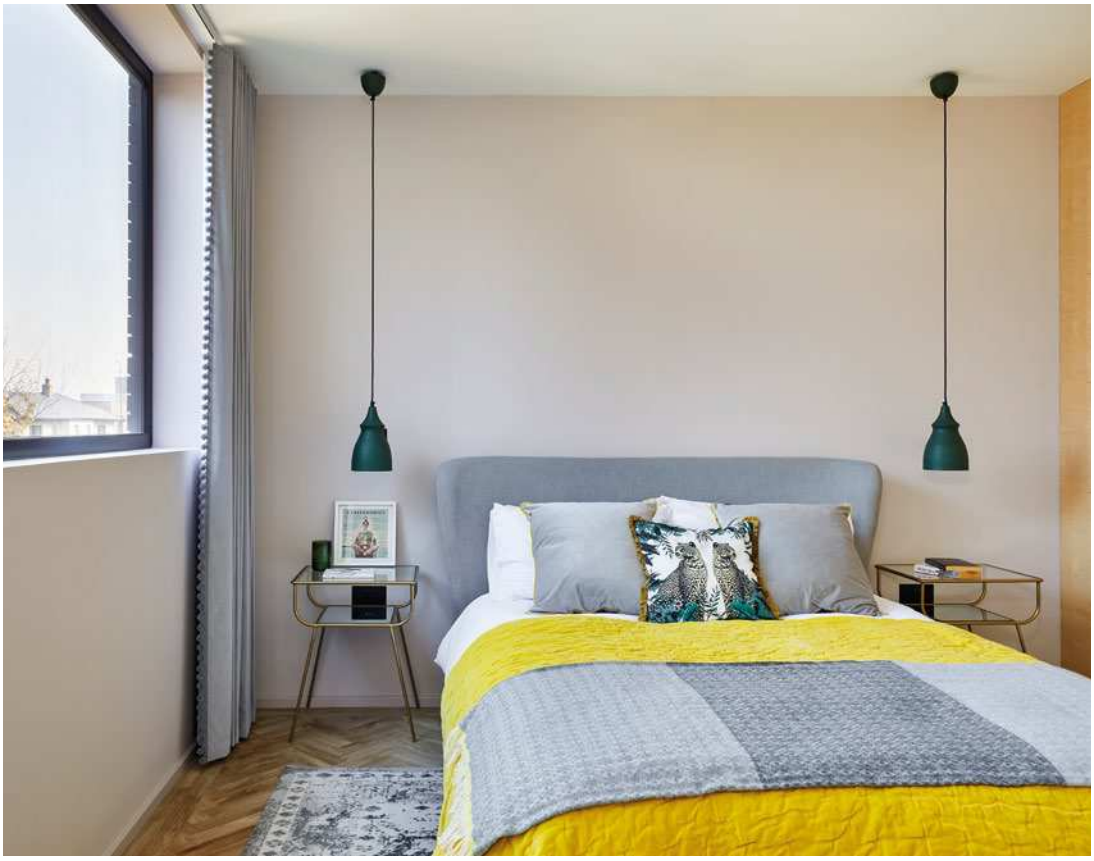
PROJECT TEAM
Project management and build TG Designer Homes (tgdesignerhomes.com)
Architect On Architecture (onarchitecture.co.uk)
Engineer MLM (mlmgroup.com)

STRUCTURE
Timber frame Turners Carpentry (turners-carpentry.co.uk)
Bricks MKM Building Supplies (mkmbs.co.uk)
Larch cladding Wingham Timber & Mouldings (wighamtimber.com), painted by SW Solutions Painters & Decorators (swsdecorators.co.uk)
Sedum roof Complete Roofing Contractors (completeroofingcontractors.com)
Aluminium doors and windows Rhino Aluminium (rhinoaluminium.co.uk)
Front door Urban Front (urbanfront.com)
Staircase Carl Trenfield (carltrenfieldarchitects.com)
Parquet floor Danny Jeffery Interiors (dannyjefferyinteriors.co.uk)
Polished concrete floors Contemporary Concrete Floors (contemporaryconcretefloors.co.uk)
Tiles Rovic Tiles (rovictiles.com)
Underfloor heating NDC Plumbing & Heating (ndcplumbingheating.com)

FIXTURES & FITTINGS
Kitchen fittings Creativ Carpentry (creativcarpentry.co.uk)
Wood burner Stovax (stovax.com)
Bathrooms Smallbone Interiors (smallboneinteriors.co.uk)

ABOVE A gallery landing opens up the entire entrance to give an expansive sense of space and to bring in natural light

RIGHT Parquet flooring in the main bedroom adds warm tones to the pale neutral walls





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Outside the box

An extended Victorian terrace has been designed to adapt to one young family's future needs

WORDS **AMY FREARSON** PHOTOGRAPHY **MARIELL LIND HANSEN AND JULIET MURPHY**



LEFT The extension's Petersen Tegl bricks are paler than the original London stock bricks, but lime-mortar pointing ties the two together

RIGHT All the new windows in the extension were made in oak



IN BRIEF

LOCATION Stoke Newington, London
TYPE OF PROPERTY Victorian terrace
BEDROOMS 4
PROJECT STARTED October 2018
PROJECT FINISHED May 2019
SIZE 123sqm
BUILD COST £95,000
CURRENT VALUE £1.2 million





Architects Ross and Emma Perkin had already designed an extension for their new house in Stoke Newington, London, before moving in back in 2017, but didn't start the work straight away. After a few months of living in the Victorian terrace, they realised they had got the design completely wrong.

Their original concept for a full-width, single-storey extension at the rear to maximise space on the ground floor meant that part of the house would not have received much natural light. By swapping this design for a two-storey addition, the couple created extra living space as well as squeezing in an extra bedroom, while allowing light into the centre of the house. Two-storey extensions are not always permitted on Victorian terraces but this one was allowed because it faces an apartment block rather than overlooking another house. 'It was a useful lesson,' says Ross. 'People are often keen to crack on as soon as they buy, but living somewhere for a while allows you to figure out where the light is and where you want to spend time.'

Ross, 37, and Emma, 38, run their own practice, Emil Eve Architects, and have »



LEFT Floor-to-ceiling glazing wraps an inverted corner, but thanks to a clever custom-made system, panels slide open on both sides to allow the space to merge with the patio garden

RIGHT An oak window seat has been added to this corner, offering a spot to relax and enjoy the garden

two young children, Jess, five, and Tom, three. They have lived in the neighbourhood for several years and loved their previous flat, but it just wasn't big enough for a family. Their goal was to create a home with plenty of space, as well as adaptability for when their circumstances change, so they won't have to move again.

Like many London townhouses, the property had a split-level layout, but it felt disjointed. 'It was a real puzzle, with a living room and bedroom on the ground floor and a kitchen in a semi-basement at the front,' Ross reveals. 'Upstairs there were two bedrooms and a bathroom.

The renovation relocated the kitchen up to the ground floor, where it now opens out onto a patio and small garden. Thanks to the new addition, this room is L-shaped rather than rectangular, which neatly divides it into two spaces: one for cooking and one for eating in. Floor-to-ceiling windows surround the inverted, south-facing corner, bringing sunlight into both areas and directing views towards trees, rather than their three-storey neighbour. 'With the garden wrapping around, the room never feels small,' explains Ross, 'and when you open the corner up you have one big space.'

With the kitchen now on the ground floor, the basement has been turned into a self-contained studio flat with its own entrance, bathroom and kitchenette, giving the couple the adaptability they were after. A great space for guests to stay in, the flat could be home for an elderly member of the family or one of the children in the future. Meanwhile, there is always the option to rent it out to bring in extra income.

Recently, due to the coronavirus crisis, it has been used by the family as a home classroom. 'We often talk to our clients about how their needs might change over time,' explains Ross. 'A lot of people don't want to think about it, but it's important to consider how to live differently if the need arises.'

On the first floor, the extension includes a family bathroom, freeing up space for a fourth bedroom. There's also a small terrace on the level above. 'It's a »

'Living somewhere for a while allows you to figure out where the light is and where you want to hang out'



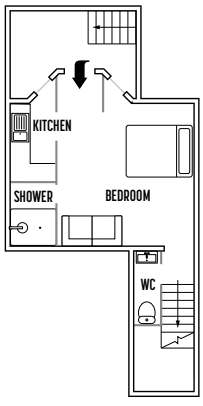


RIGHT An artwork by David Nash draws attention to the living-room fireplace, along with a set of two dressmaker's dummies

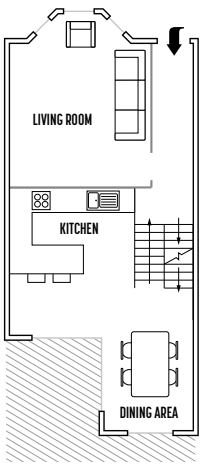
FAR RIGHT The living room was largely unchanged in the refurbishment, with the furniture pieces all from their previous flat



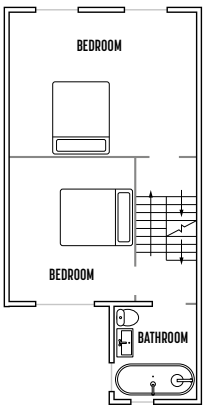
FLOOR PLANS



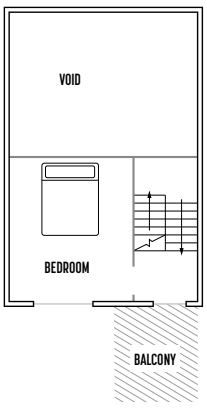
LOWER GROUND FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

really nice spot because it gets the morning light,' says Ross.

The couple chose a Danish brick for the new-build, which they also used for the patio and garden walls. It is paler in colour than the London stock brick of the main house, but has a similar handmade texture, as the material is struck with water while being made. Ross, who is also a certified conservation architect, convinced the builders to use lime mortar for the pointing, just as the Victorians did, instead of the more commonly used Portland cement.

Ross's passion for materials and craftsmanship developed at an early age. His father is a carpenter, and as he has plenty of experience in a workshop, he decided to make the majority of the joinery. The kitchen island with in-built storage, a window seat and shelving in the bathroom





ABOVE Paintings in the main bedroom are by Emma's mum, Sally Graham

RIGHT The self-contained studio flat is a future-proof space that has its own entrance, bedroom, bathroom and kitchen

'We often talk to clients about how their needs might change over time. A lot don't want to think about it'

and dining area are all oak. The shelves are filled with arrangements of plants, books and ceramics. 'I made them, but Emma is better at creating the displays,' says Ross.

The couple stopped short at making their own windows, choosing bespoke designs that allowed them to match the proportions of the original glazing and create patio doors that open at the centre, despite the right-angled bend. The interiors are decorated in a rich palette of colours to complement the warm tones of oak, and a painting by Irish artist Ben Crawford, who Ross went to school with, inspired the perfect shade of royal blue for the kitchen. This handcrafted attention to detail gives it a unique character that belies the relatively modest cost of the project. 'The word bespoke can seem scary,' says Ross. 'But sometimes it can be a more cost-effective way to get what you want.' GD





ABOVE AND RIGHT
Bespoke shelves, made by Ross, were designed to match the new oak windows



SUPPLIERS

PROJECT TEAM
Architect Emil Eve Architects (emileve.co.uk)
Structural engineer Atlam (07388 429 479)
Main contractor County Construction (countyconst.co.uk)

STRUCTURE
Windows and doors Jonathan Read (01728 723 647)
Bricks Petersen Tegl (petersen-tegl.dk)

FIXTURES & FITTINGS
Kitchen doors Valchromat (valchromat.pt)
Worksurface GEC Anderson (gecanderson.co.uk)
Sanitaryware EC1 Bathrooms (ec1bathrooms.co.uk)
Ceramic tiles Johnson Tiles (johnson-tiles.com)
Lighting Tala (tala.co.uk), Viabizzuno (viabizzuno.com)

FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES
Artwork Ben Crawford (bencrawfordart.com), Molly Martin (mollymartin.org), Nigel Peake (nigelpeake.com), Rebecca Wilson (rebeccawilson.co.uk)

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IN BRIEF

LOCATION Kelso, Scottish Borders
TYPE OF PROPERTY
Converted church hall
BEDROOMS 3
PROJECT STARTED
March 2018
PROJECT FINISHED
October 2019
SIZE 85sqm
BUILD COST £180,000
CURRENT VALUE £180,000
(excluding commercial building)



Coloured smooth cement render and scorched larch cladding were chosen to be in keeping with adjacent buildings on the street

RIGHT The south-facing courtyard provides a private outdoor space and captures direct sunlight most of the day

Divine intervention

A dramatic conversion has transformed a former church hall into a three-bedroom home

WORDS **CAROLINE EDNIE**
PHOTOGRAPHY **DAVID BARBOUR**



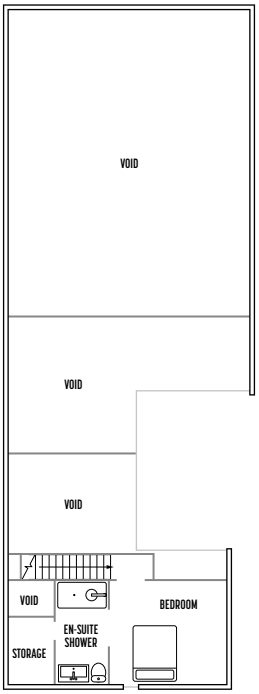


When Christine Hamilton began to think about overhauling the 1930s church hall that her family had bought 25 years ago for their children's nursery business in the Scottish Borders market town of Kelso, she faced a quandary. Should she re-roof the hall, which would cost more than the building was worth, or give it a new lease of life by turning it into two houses, one for her parents and one as a small property for rental income?

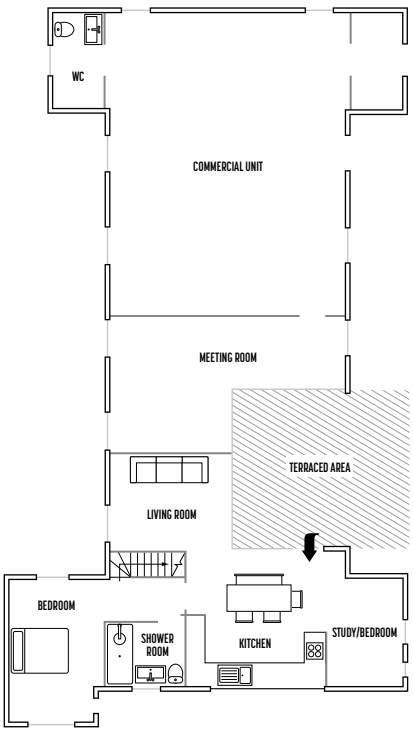
Serendipity intervened when Christine, 37, was looking for renovation ideas. As part of Edinburgh's Doors Open Days (doorsopendays.org.uk), she visited Ramp House, designed by Thea and Ian McMillan of Chambers McMillan Architects. Later, Christine spoke to the couple about her potential plans. She wasn't able to finance her original ideal of turning it into two houses, plus her parents weren't keen on moving into the town yet, so she scaled the project back to retain a commercial unit at the rear and a house at the front.

'Following an initial discussion with Christine it was apparent that we needed to bring light into the hall and to create outdoor space', says Thea. 'We thought, how about we take a bite out of it to bring in light, with all the living space arranged around a private courtyard?' »

FLOOR PLANS



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



The entrance to the house is through the courtyard

OPPOSITE Christine chose Farrow & Ball's Arsenic shade for the steel structure and to highlight some elements

The dining table and chairs were designed by Christine and made by the project's joiners. The table top is made in the same material as the worksurfaces





The local planners were on board with the proposal for the three-bedroom home, as the change of use would preserve the building and continue its life. During the 18-month project, the whole property, including the commercial unit, was given a new roof and Christine had to co-ordinate bringing new utilities on site so that the unit had its own water, gas and electric supplies.

'We ripped the front of the building apart, then put it back together,' says Christine. 'If I'd brought in a construction company they might have got it all done sooner, but I wanted to use the individual trades I knew. I didn't want it to be quick; I wanted it to be right.'

Vertical steel posts with horizontal steel RSJs were installed to create the courtyard space, with huge glazed panels and sliding doors at ground level and cladding above. An open-plan kitchen and dining area at the front faces the street and the double-height living area is tucked behind. The main bedroom is located at the building's former entrance, with a large bathroom and a further bedroom/study also at ground level. A staircase has been inserted leading to a bedroom and en-suite shower room in the former attic, which has been opened up further by extending the existing hipped roof to the front of the building to form a gable.

There was also the issue of access at the side, part of which is a shared space owned by the Roman Catholic church behind, but which the property has a right of »



BELOW At the front of the house, a Howdens kitchen features base units in a super matt graphite finish, installed under the new slot window



access. However, this was all pretty straightforward and Christine paid for this area to be paved and gravelled to tidy it up, once the work was completed. 'There was space for a ramp, so it made sense to put one in, and it provides a beautiful gradient up from the road and round to my front door,' she says.

Outside, a pewter-grey smooth cement render, in keeping with the adjacent stone buildings along the street, was applied to the lower part of the house. The cladding above is larch, every piece scorched by Christine herself using a double-headed blowtorch. She project managed everything, arriving on site at 8am every day and visiting

'The architects worked out what would fit, but once I got the plans, I took it from there, working with the local contractors'

ABOVE The dual aspect main bedroom is located behind the former entrance to the building on the ground floor

RIGHT Christine was inspired by a magazine feature to paint the staircase yellow. It adds a bold splash of colour to the centre of the house



it on her way home in the evening. During the early stages she commuted from Edinburgh, but moved in with her parents, who live nearby, for the final year.

'The architects worked out what would fit in the space, but once I got the plans, I took it from there, working with the local contractors I appointed,' says Christine. 'We tweaked the design when we started to understand the building, uncovering it as we stripped it back. We had to replace all the floor joists downstairs because when we lifted the floorboards, they revealed themselves to be wonky, and I needed regular centres to lay all the underfloor heating pipes correctly.'

For the interiors, Christine had sketches and diagrams to refer to. 'I absolutely love detail,' she says. 'I could see what I wanted in my head, I just had to work out how to get there.' She also requested the biggest sliding doors possible in the bedroom and study. 'They're 2.3 metres high, custom-made with sleek hidden sliding mechanisms.'

The emotional and financial investment in the project finally convinced Christine to move in instead of renting it out. 'I had spent hours painting, which became quite meditative, and I really enjoyed the process of chatting through every decision with the local trades. I feel proud of everyone's hard work.' GD





RIGHT AND BELOW
The attic at the front of the building has been extended into a new gable form and includes a bedroom and an en-suite shower room



SUPPLIERS

PROJECT TEAM
Architect Chambers McMillan Architects (cmcmarchitects.com)
Structural engineer Structural Design Consultants (structuraldesignconsultants.com)
Joiners Mark and Craig Logan (07977 130 075)

STRUCTURE
Timber windows and front door Allan Brothers (allanbrothers.co.uk)
Roof lights Glazing Vision (rooflights.com)
Underfloor heating Underfloor Heating Direct (underfloorheating-direct.com)
Render K Rend (k-rend.co.uk)
Siberian-larch cladding MKM Building Supplies (mkmbs.co.uk)
Bespoke coping stones Border Concrete Products (borderconcreteproducts.co.uk)
Spanish slate SIG Roofing (sigroofing.co.uk)

FIXTURES & FITTINGS
Tiles Topps Tiles (toppstiles.co.uk)
Clerkenwell super matt kitchen units in graphite Howdens (howdens.com)
Mistral worksurfaces MKM Building Supplies (as before)
Sanitaryware Victorian Plumbing (victorianplumbing.co.uk)
Light switches and sockets Trendiswitch (trendiswitch.com)
Lighting John Lewis (johnlewis.com), MyFaktory (myfaktory.com), Wayfair (wayfair.co.uk)
Paint Farrow & Ball (farrow-ball.com), Little Greene (littlegreene.com)

FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES
Duolite blinds Apollo Blinds (apollo-blinds.co.uk)

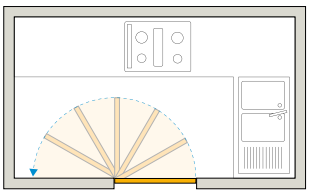


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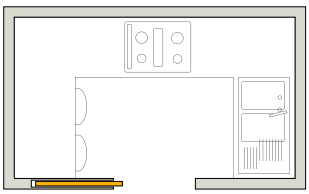
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Out of the blue

The coastal prevailing wind guided the design of this idyllic beach home for a family of surfers

WORDS **JEREMY CALLAGHAN**
PHOTOGRAPHY **GAELLE LE BOULICAUT**



The house nestles into the exposed site, which is just a short walk to the shoreline and the area's perfect windsurfing conditions

IN BRIEF

LOCATION Paros, Greece
TYPE OF PROPERTY Detached three-storey villa and guest house
BEDROOMS 5 (main house), 1 (guest house)
PROJECT STARTED 2016
PROJECT FINISHED 2019
SIZE 434sqm
LAND COST £54 per sqm
BUILD COST £2,252 per sqm



The outdoor dining and living area can be protected from the strong winds by closing the sliding doors at the rear

RIGHT The view from the terrace across the pool to the sea allows the family to keep an eye on the wind and waves



On the Greek island of Paros, Punda Beach is synonymous with sun, sand and wind. Not a gentle summer breeze, but a stiff Aegean gale that draws windsurfers the world over to revel in its wild forces. Elina Georgiou and husband Spyros, both 50, and their three sons, Stelios, 21, George, 19 and Angel, 16, are long-time fanatics of the sport, so Punda Beach was an obvious choice when they were looking to build a new home. They wanted somewhere they could enjoy quality downtime, which had plenty of space for friends and where they could entertain large groups in style.

But the ever-present wind was not the only hurdle they had to overcome. Recently instigated planning laws, designed to inhibit coastal development, imposed restrictions on what could be built close to the sea. The work-around was to find a plot of land that already had a property on it, in which case the old laws could still be applied to new construction work.

Elina and Spyros bought a one-hectare plot of land with a small building on it. The site comprised a low-lying gully running down to the sea, which presented the advantage of allowing a new house to hug the landscape, thus avoiding the wind. 'We'd dreamt of having our own beach home for some years. What it would look like was clear to us, even before we found the land,' says Elina. Nevertheless, they still needed to find an architect to turn their ideas into reality and to iron out the conundrum of what was possible regarding the planning laws.

A friend, landscape gardener Eva Papadimitriou, who eventually designed the grounds of the house, introduced Elina to architects Sotiris Mallas and Aaron Ritenour, who lead Athens-based Esé Studio. 'From day one it was clear to us that these were the people we wanted to design our new home,' Elina recalls.

The plan was to turn the original house into a separate annexe for the family's guests to stay in. And as Elina and Spyros were able to work with the old laws, the new-build included an excavated basement level – something that probably would not have been permitted otherwise. The architects took full advantage of this opportunity and created an entire underground level, which provides valuable storage space where the family keep all of their surfing and sports equipment. It also houses the pool pumps, keeping them hidden from the main living areas, as well as some extra guest rooms.

Importantly, the basement also allowed the house to bed itself into the surrounding landscape, thereby avoiding the worst of the winds. 'On certain parts of the island, the planners are really trying to slow down development and they are not allowing swimming pools or basements at all,' says Sotiris. »

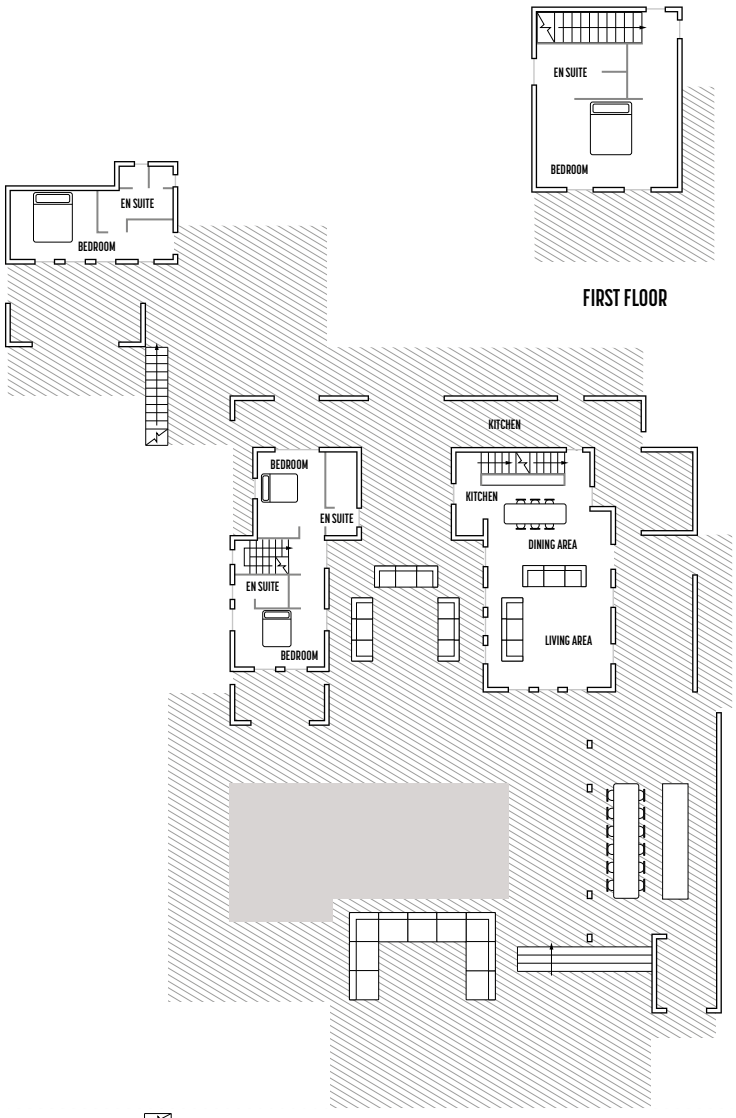


The architects chose a burnt-wood finish for the cabinets. A single piece of marble forms the worksurface and sink. The RAAF dining table is by Dutch designer Piet Boon and has been paired with chairs by Ton





FLOOR PLANS


EN SUITE
BEDROOM
FIRST FLOOR
EN SUITE
BEDROOM
KITCHEN
BEDROOM
EN SUITE
KITCHEN
DINING AREA
EN SUITE
BEDROOM
LIVING AREA
GROUND FLOOR
GROUP BUNK ROOM
WC
WC
WC
LIVING ROOM
BEDROOM
WC
BASEMENT

‘We’d dreamt of having our own beach home for some years. What it would look like was clear to us before we bought the land’

The downside was an extensive excavation. The upside was that it provided all the natural stone for the construction. ‘There are two types of stone in Paros: good and bad,’ explains Sotiris. ‘What came out of the ground was quality stone from which all of the above ground walls are built.’

Even the walls of the house itself are built in stone, rendered in white lime-based concrete, conforming to Cycladic architectural tradition. ‘We added only three more materials,’ says Elina. ‘Concrete, to achieve the old mosaic effect for the flooring, wood and marble.’

The indoor conventions of kitchen, living and dining areas are all duplicated outside. Even the continuity of the floor level, in polished concrete, helps dissolve any boundary between in and out. The building folds around an outdoor living area where the family emerges each morning to have coffee and assess the conditions for the day ahead. ‘The view across the terrace, pool and garden to the sea is captivating,’ says Elina. ‘I still can’t get used to it.’

The architects advised using dark window frames to create a contrast with the absolute white of the building and highlights its shape. ‘We needed an extra colour to accentuate the details and finally went with an olive grey,’ Elina reveals. ‘It’s the shade of the underneath of an olive-tree leaf, which I love. We used it for the pergolas and other elements that we wanted to highlight.’

The tiles used for the pool are a vivid Aegean blue, creating a continuity with the sea that lies beyond. While the garden includes plants that are native to the local fields, creating a contrasting carpet of natural earthy tones. Landscape gardener Eva took a dry piece of land that extends to the beach and gave it new life and vitality with her planting scheme. Lavender, thyme and oregano, among other traditional Greek shrubs, were planted to give the impression that they had grown naturally. And the fencing consists of strong, resilient bamboo, which is widely found on the island.

‘I wake up every morning feeling grateful and happy for having a beautiful family and living in a wonderful home on such a lovely island,’ says Elina. GD





The open-plan living area has a calm, relaxed feel. The window dimensions were strictly dictated by local planning laws, which limited the size to 1.2 metres in width



By the pool, another dining area with an outdoor kitchen is designed for large-scale entertaining and can comfortably seat 20 around a table that was designed by the architects and made from stone and wood by Emmanuel Fokianos





LEFT The architects designed bespoke touches, such as the sinks, doors and metal door handles in beaten bronze

BELOW The main bedroom has a terrace that overlooks the pool area, landscaped garden, beach and the sea beyond





The basement terrace level demonstrates the extensive excavation required to sink the house into the landscape. The original house in the background is now guest accommodation

SUPPLIERS

PROJECT TEAM
Architects Sotiris Mallas and Aaron Ritenour, Esé Studio (esestudio.gr)
Contractor Aztech (aztech.com.gr)
Landscape architect Eva Papadimitriou (outside.gr)

FIXTURES & FITTINGS
Marble bathrooms Emmanuel Fokianos (stoneworks.gr)
Windows and doors Kritikos Wood (kritikoswood.gr)

FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES
Marble tables Emmanuel Fokianos (as before)
Outdoor furniture Ethimo (ethimo.com), Kourtis (kourtis.gr), Lifestyle Home Collection (lifestyle94.com)

Sofas Lifestyle Home Collection (as before)
Coffee table Zuiver (zuiver.com)
Wood occasional chairs Ethimo (as before)
Dining table Studio Piet Toon (pietboon.com)
Dining chairs Ton (ton.eu)

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GRANDDESIGNS

PROJECTS



This single-storey extension in Canberra, Australia, by Austin Maynard Architects has added a new bedroom, bathroom and kitchen. For more, go to page 79

PHOTOGRAPHY DEREK SWALWELL

Renovation diary: part 12 **67**

Advice on self-build mortgages **73**

Stunning single-storey houses **79**

Ideas for converting the loft **91**

Timber flooring guide **105**



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The glazing is in place at the back of Reena and Matt's home but lockdown has taken its toll on their plans. They had hoped to be moved in by summer



Reena Simon, 37, interior stylist and blogger (hyggeforhome.com), lives in Cardiff with her husband, Matt, 41, and their three young daughters. Follow the family's progress each month as they convert a 1960s bungalow into a two-storey home

Delayed but undeterred

There have been unavoidable setbacks on the build but progress has been made by adapting conventional working practices

We have been in a strange no-man's land for the past few months, as I'm sure many of you who are in the middle of building a house or renovating during the pandemic will identify with. After the continuation of some work in early lockdown, progress on our project came to a halt. Although the builders wanted to plough on, materials ran out when suppliers' factories and workshops closed.

We were particularly disrupted by the nationwide shortage of plaster. It seems that the panic-buying did not stop at the UK's supermarkets but also affected the construction industry, as materials were snapped up and stockpiled.

Before long, restrictions were placed on the amount of bags each builder was permitted to buy, which contributed to a four-week construction delay for us. »



Screed is laid prior to the installation of underfloor heating and a layer of concrete. The staircase is to follow

The schedule of work went out of the window, and the build stages became reactive as the team busied themselves on jobs according to which materials arrived on site. Our moving-in day came and went, and I haven't set a new completion date, as predicting when supplies will be delivered is still very difficult. But Matt and I remain hopeful that we will be able to move in by the end of the year.

We count ourselves extremely lucky to have kept our jobs through the pandemic and that our bank released extra contingency funding. For now, we can continue to live in our rented house but that extra pot of money will run out very soon, and we have limited time to be able to afford rent and two mortgages. All the flooring will have to be laid in around two months and at least one bathroom must be in working order. We will set up a temporary kitchen and forego the dream of living in a home that is complete.

> 'It seems that the panic-buying also affected the construction industry'

Still, it has not been all doom and gloom. The build team tackled the hard landscaping during the first few weeks of lockdown, during a period of sunny weather. It was a very expensive part of the project, costing approximately £10,000, but absolutely essential to manage the groundwater and drainage, build retaining walls to create a parking area at the front of the house and to level the ground at the rear ready for decking when our budget allows. When I look at what is essentially mounds of earth and breeze-blocks, it seems crazy that it could cost so much but the equipment and labour involved was extreme. It helps to remember that this is the foundation for our dream garden.

An equally exciting milestone was the pouring of the polished concrete floor, albeit without the polish for now. This, too, was »

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Next summer, these sliding doors will connect the house to Reena and her family's dream garden

PROJECT TEAM

Architect Downs Merrifield Architects (downsmerrifield.com) **Planning consultant** LRM Planning (lrmplanning.com) **Interior architecture** Alex Nikjoo (nikjoo.co.uk) **Landscape architect** Victoria Wade Landscape Architecture (victoriawade.co.uk) **Lighting** Nicholas Merchent, Home Lighting & Design (hldstudio.com) **Builder** REG Construction (07791 143 017) **Floor** Premier Concrete Design (premierconcretedesign.co.uk)

delayed by a few weeks, as the supply chain stalled. Once the work could begin, we needed a concrete mixer with an 80-metre long pipe to reach the house. This is one of the complications of being a backland development with access to the house along a narrow lane. Matt and I are over the moon with the floor. We managed to have a quick look at it the day after it was poured and before it had to be covered for protection while other work continued. A few days before we move in, the installers will be back to take off the covers, and sand and seal it. We chose a pale-grey shade to keep the north-west-facing space light, bright and airy.

After waiting what feels like forever, next month we will finally have the steel staircase fitted. GD

REENA'S RENOVATION TIP

Try not to cut too many corners. We used a specialist company to install our concrete floor. Its expertise came at a cost but ensures it will last for many, many years.

RENOVATION PROJECT PLANNING GUIDE

1 FINDING A PLOT OR RUN-DOWN PROPERTY
Search via land and property websites, contact local estate agents and get on the mailing lists for upcoming property auctions.

2 SEEK PLANNING PERMISSION
It's required before you start any work, apart from changes completed under permitted-development rules.

3 SET A BUDGET AND HIRE YOUR TEAM
Work out a budget and then secure funds as a priority. Seek recommendations for architects and builders. Visit their completed projects.

4 MANAGE THE PROJECT
Give your team a clear brief for the build. Set a schedule of works and make sure that the legally binding construction contract is ready.

5 MAKE REGULAR INSPECTIONS
Visit the site to ensure that everything is in order and the work is progressing as planned. Address any issues as they arise.

6 SIGN OFF THE PROJECT
Take a tour of the finished work with your build team and note down any snags that need to be corrected before signing off on the renovation project.

For more on financing your project, see page 73

Next month: Focus turns to the interior

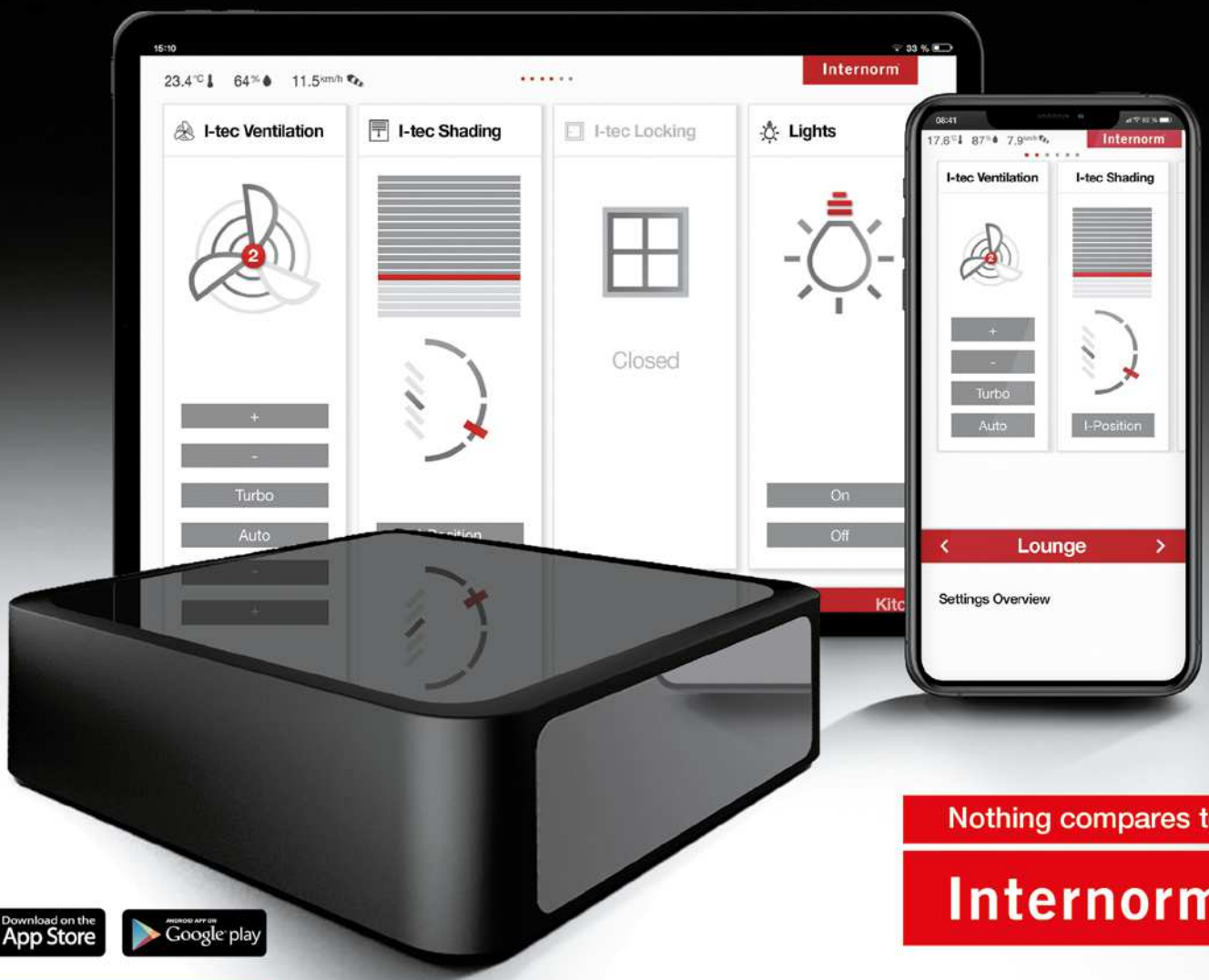
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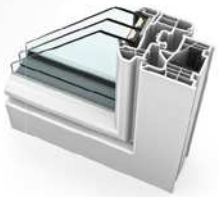
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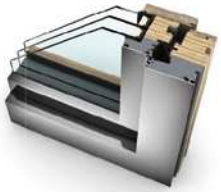
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Steph and Alex Wilson funded their build with profits from a land sale and a small mortgage

How to secure a mortgage

The latest advice on successfully financing your self-build project

Unless you are in the fortunate position of having enough money in the bank to cover the entire cost of your project, it is likely you'll be looking to secure a mortgage. The majority of self-builders will source a specialist product tailored to suit the needs of building a home.

Setting a budget

Start by establishing a budget, which ideally you must stick to. As a rough guide, assess the amount of cash and equity, subject to lending criteria, you already have along with the total you can afford to borrow, and then calculate the size and type of house you can build with the funds available. Or if you know the size of the property, work out in reverse how much it will be to buy a suitable plot and build the home of your dreams on it. Factor in the cost of where you live for the duration of the project. Can you stay on the site in a caravan, which you may have to buy, or will you need to rent somewhere to live?

Applying for your self-build mortgage

A prospective lender will want to see evidence of the granted planning permission, detailed architectural drawings and specifications, as well as the total project costs. You need to be clear on all possible figures, such as fees for professional help, including valuations, as well as the build type, construction method and materials. Seek help from an experienced and qualified project manager to determine and prepare the total project costs and schedule of works with cash flow. »



This unusual treehouse home was built in Dursley, Gloucestershire for just £270,000



Mary Riley, founder of **Mary Riley Solutions**, gives information on how self-build mortgages have been affected by the pandemic (maryriley solutions.co.uk)

The affordability factor

Are there currently fewer self-build mortgage products available?

Yes. Some lenders have paused activity in this sector of the market and a few withdrew all their products. But I am pleased to say some are beginning to reappear.

Have the lending requirements become any tougher?

They have been tweaked to accommodate Covid-19 underwriting. As a result, greater scrutiny is given to aspects of an applicant's employment, such as which sector they work in, whether they have been furloughed – particularly if for more than three months - and if a salary is made up of basic pay with a bonus structure. Also, a cautious approach is taken to those with access to substantial credit-card loans, as this debt could get out of control. It is also tricky to access high loan to value self-build mortgages, due to the current difficulty in predicting the finished property's value.

Is there any good news?

I'm pleased to say that, in general, interest rates and fees have not increased. And lender appetite is still strong with a wide range of products available.

What would increase someone's chance of getting the mortgage they want?

There are several favourable factors; having secure employment, a minimal debt burden, funds to contribute to the project, evidence of a strong team and a robust schedule of works showing time scales and cash flow. All steps should be taken at the very beginning to add a healthy contingency to the total project costs, of at least 20 percent. And it really helps to provide a lender with evidence that you have monthly disposable income, which can be saved after all expenses have been accounted for. At the end of the day, it comes down to affordability and the loan to value ratio.

Has anything else changed recently?

It's taking longer from the initial enquiry being made to an offer of a mortgage being issued. In part, this is down to institutions adapting working practices for social distancing, and also some staff were furloughed. GD

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10 Single-storey build projects

There are distinct advantages to living on one level, as these amazing houses demonstrate

WORDS **ANNA WINSTON**

Sometimes, a single storey is more than enough to create a generous home. And building with one level can be particularly useful when working on an unusual site, if you want easy access or are wrestling with restrictive planning conditions. From a house on stilts on a rocky outcrop in Sweden to a home inside a 200-year-old walled garden in Devon, and two dramatically different versions of the traditional barn, each of the following designs has resulted from a unique set of circumstances and demonstrates an imaginative flair that offers inspiration for even the most modest project.



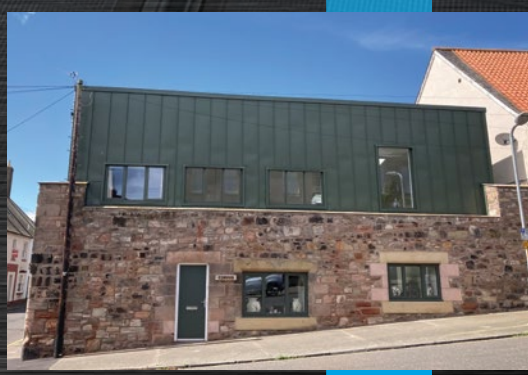
1 **NATURAL RESPONSE** Cocoon House is a weekend home on Long Island, USA, designed by architect Nina Edwards Anker of Nea Studio (neastudio.com) for herself and her brother, who both live in New York. Its name is taken from the shape of the home, which is a response to legal restrictions that required the building to keep a specific distance from the surrounding wetlands and be no taller than 4.8 metres. The 161-square-metre, three-bedroom house, which cost around £1,190 per square metre, features rounded walls that curve along the northern and western facades, with cedar-shingle cladding complementing the materials used locally. In contrast, floor-to-ceiling glazing on the south and east sides provides expansive views to the ocean, while tinted skylights use hues based on Goethe's colour theory to reflect the uses of the spaces below, creating a rainbow-like effect. (neastudio.com) »



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2 LIMITED FOOTPRINT

Built for a family of five, Uncovered Cabin by Amsterdam-based architect Crafted Works sits in a holiday park in Drenthe, near the Dutch-German border, which does not allow permanent structures of more than five metres in height or with a footprint of more than 70 square metres.

The owners wanted to be able to host friends as well as provide private sleeping spaces for all of the family. To achieve this, Crafted Works developed an angled plan that places the children's and adults' bedrooms at the opposite ends of the building, with the kid's beds stacked across three levels to maximise space.

The architect was drawn to the idea of building the house themselves. So they set up a contracting company, making the transition between design and build seamless. This meant that the house benefitted from an attention to detail that would otherwise have been beyond the £1,260 per-square-metre budget.

Constructed mainly from Douglas fir, structural materials are left exposed to highlight the craftsmanship involved in its creation. (craftedworks.nl)



3 A MODERNISING STRATEGY

Two shingle-clad extensions have increased the living space of an interwar bungalow in Canberra, Australia, adding a new bedroom, bathroom and kitchen. The homeowners, Paul and Lindy, who have a teenage daughter, Mia, asked Austin Maynard Architects to turn the modest house into a four-bedroom home that catches the sun.

Instead of demolishing the building, the architects realised it would be more interesting to work with what was already there and resist local trends to build something bigger. With a budget of around £2,200 per square metre, they transformed the interior layout and created the extensions, bringing the total area up to 233 square metres.

Glass corridors connect the new and original spaces, with the frames for the glazing cut into the brick of the house to make them almost invisible. The hand-finished and fixed white shingles that clad the additions provide a contemporary contrast to the original materials. 'We now have a beautiful space to live in,' says Lindy. (maynardarchitects.com) »

4 **RURAL DESIGN** Occupying a site next to a farmhouse in Bentworth, Hampshire, this 350-square-metre black barn-shaped home provides its owners, a young couple with four children who run a health-food company, with space for friends and family to stay on long-term visits. Designed by Madrid and London-based studio AMPS Arquitectura y Diseño, the £1.8 million house is built from prefabricated, laminated-timber panels for ease of construction. The outer layer is a screen of black-stained Accoya modified wood, chosen to break up the otherwise uniform appearance of the house.

The single-storey design allows every room to have access to an outdoor space and reduce the impact on the views of the surrounding countryside. Pale-coloured, tactile materials used inside the house were chosen to contrast with the exterior, with limestone and lime-based mortar on the floors and chestnut panels and Mortex – a mineral coating with a waxy finish – on the walls. Bespoke furniture in the two children's bedrooms include a treehouse-like design with two sleeping platforms and stairs that double as a game and a ballet bar. One of the adult bedrooms has a meditation space, while the other boasts a cantilevered desktop. (amps.es)







3 PLOT SOLUTION Some architects would be put off building on a site dominated by a huge outcrop of granite, but Swedish duo Mikael and Fanny Ellsinger saw the lump of red rock in Gothenburg, Sweden, as an opportunity to experiment with design and construction techniques and create their own home.

The 152-square-metre, three-bedroom house is an aluminium box raised above the ground on 17 super-slim galvanised-steel columns cast into holes drilled into the granite, while the roof is supported by the outer walls and three wooden pillars in the middle of the building. The home is divided in two: on one side are the bedrooms, two bathrooms and a laundry room, with the kitchen and living space on the other. A courtyard brings light into the house and helps keep it cool during the summer. The project came in at just under £365,000. (ellsingerarkibad.com) »



6 ACCESS ALL AREAS A huge glass roof light draws together the four arms of the cross-shaped Smithy Lane House in rural Cheshire, flooding the central space with sunshine. Fasciato Architects demolished the existing building to create a generous, contemporary home for a couple in their eighties, who asked for a single-storey building with better connections to the surrounding site and level access to take into account their mobility needs. The £1.5 million house features pitched slate roofs, white rendered walls, exposed rafter ends and brick chimneys, mixing clean modern lines with traditional elements. Each wing in the 550-square-metre, four-bedroom home fulfils a specific function: one for bedrooms and bathrooms; one for the utility room, cloakroom, guest toilet and study; one for family spaces; and one for a more formal living room. Large windows, wall-of-glass doors and a glazed walkway maximise access to the outdoor spaces. (fasciato.co.uk)



7 PLANNING RESTRICTIONS On a site in the New Forest, Hampshire, The Barn is an efficient, modern reimagining of an agricultural building. The 180-square-metre home sits within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a conservation area and an area of special scientific interest. Strict planning restrictions meant the design had to be single-storey with a limited footprint. To further reduce the impact of the energy-efficient, three-bedroom house, the architect used recycled materials that could cope with the sometimes harsh weather of its coastal setting, while responding to the client's request for the building not to change significantly over time.

Timber from an old barn was used for the exterior, while the north and south gable ends feature Douglas fir boards with a rough, wavy edge and their original bark to add texture and a connection to the landscape. (padstudio.co.uk) »



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8 FOUNDATION LIMITATIONS

An old stone building in Little Chapelton, Aberdeenshire, known locally as The Mill, provided the foundations for a new single-storey, three-bedroom home clad in Siberian larch. The owner, who is a music teacher, had been keen to reuse the original building, which was embedded into a steep, three-metre-high embankment, but TAP Architects realised that this would have left it vulnerable to flooding. Instead, the granite structure became a plant room and a plinth for the new steel and timber house, which partially replaces the old pitched roof.

The existing walls could only support a single level above, so the house was designed in an L-shape with two bays. One projects out over the granite mill walls while the other sits on new concrete foundations and is oriented to provide shelter for outdoor areas on the south and west. The living spaces are arranged around two pieces of furniture – a ten-seat dining table and a baby grand piano. The total construction cost was £310,000. (taparchitects.co.uk) »



9 HIDDEN HOUSE

This low-energy home in Devon is concealed behind a brick frontage, which completes a 200-year-old garden wall that already stood on the site. The four-bedroom home doubles as a gallery space for a collection of pottery and artworks that the owners have accumulated over the years, with small display areas throughout. Architect McLean Quinlan won permission for the building under Paragraph 79 thanks to its simple, sensitive design. The original boundary walls, which once encircled the kitchen garden of a Georgian house, informed both the single-storey height and the shape of the flat-roofed, 365-square-metre home. Black render on the garden-facing facade helps the building recede from its surroundings. Inside, a courtyard with a glass roof at the heart of the home creates an indoor oasis and draws light into the interior. A certified Passivhaus, the building creates more energy than is needed to run it. (mcleanquinlan.com)



10 BUILT ON BUDGET

Inspired by Japanese courtyard houses, this 85-square-metre, two-bedroom house occupies an infill site on a modern estate in Cambridge. Its owners had the budget to buy a small house but were uninspired. Instead, they bought a corner plot and asked Haysom Ward Miller Architects to demonstrate that a modest home can have design merit with good energy performance.

With a budget of £220,000, the architect chose to keep the structure simple, with a single-storey house tucked behind a garden wall. Instead of filling the site, they created a sequence of indoor and outdoor spaces. The roof rises over the centre of the home to create a generous space and make the surrounding living areas feel intimate. Brick, concrete and textured plaster are left exposed, making them into a key feature. (haysomwardmiller.co.uk) GD

PHOTOGRAPHY CAYLON HACKWITH, MAARTEN WILLEMSTEIN, DEREK SWALWELL, IMAGEN SUBLIMINAL, IMIGUEL DE GUZMÁN + ROCIO ROMERO), ÅKE E.SON LINDMAN, FRENCH + TYE, STÅLE ERIKSEN, DAVID BARBOUR, JIM STEPHENSON, RICHARD FRASER

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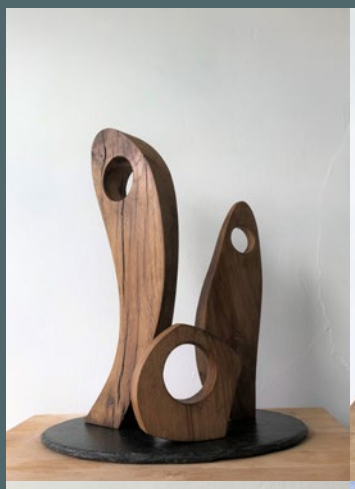
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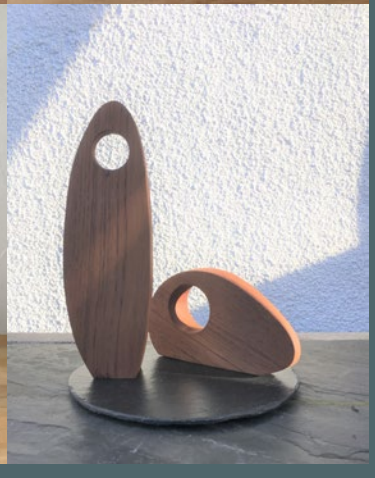


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Take it up a level

Quicker and less hassle than building an extension, converting the attic is a cost-effective way to increase your living space

WORDS **CAROLINE RODRIGUES**

If you have run out of room, exploiting the loft is one of the best ways to add space and value to your home. There are plenty of loft companies promising a fuss-free design-and-build service. They'll do all the hard work of obtaining permission and organising all the trades needed, from scaffolders to carpenters and plumbers. And if you have the time and skills to do some of the internal fit-out, some companies will supply a 'shell' loft, which you can complete yourself.

Loft specialists tend to work from standard designs, which they can adapt to suit your house. One newer option is modular solutions from companies such as Moduloft (moduloft.co.uk). They build the entire loft, including doors and windows offsite before craning it into position. This can cut the build time dramatically, though preparatory work on the house must be carried out first.

For an inventive design tailored to the way you live, or if you're considering a whole-house renovation, ask an architect. 'Architects offer a holistic approach to design, from the main planning moves right down to the custom cabinets and handle specification,' says John Proctor, director and architect at Proctor & Shaw (proctorandshaw.com). 'The attention to detail that goes in to a design-first approach speaks for itself.' Architects can provide a full service, or you can find your own builder to carry out the work.

Prices start from around £15,000-£20,000 for a room in the loft and rise considerably as soon as you add a dormer to between £30,000-£60,000 – and more for a mansard roof or bespoke solutions. The most basic could take four to six weeks, with more complex projects up to ten weeks. »



The owners of this four-bedroom Victorian terraced home in Camden, London compromised on house size to buy centrally and reduce their commute, then asked Paul Archer Design to make the most of the space. The team extended at the rear, and created a loft bedroom and en-suite bathroom. The project cost £400,000 (paularcherdesign.co.uk)

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GRAND DESIGNS



THIS IMAGE AND RIGHT A loft extension has been hidden behind the retained brick gable end of the roof of this Victorian home in west London. Inglis Badrashi Loddo designed a shared space for the children leading onto a pair of bedrooms. Lined in painted timber boarding, the loft is part of a major refurbishment that included an expanded basement and small extension (ibla.co.uk)

Choose a type

The simplest conversion route is to add skylights to the existing roof space, but the usable area will be restricted by the sloping roof. Adding a dormer, essentially a box built out from the slope of the roof, will increase the head height and the accessible floor area. L-shaped dormers are often used in period properties that have a main roof as well as a smaller roof that covers the rooms that extend at the back. A mansard conversion alters the sloping sides of a roof, bringing them up at a steeper pitch for added full-height space, into which small dormers can be inserted.

For properties with a hipped roof, where all sides slope, a hip to gable conversion extends the hipped end to a vertical wall. Hip to gable and rear dormers can be combined.





Assessing the space

If you're in a period home, it's likely the loft will be suitable for conversion. Pop your head through the hatch and have a look. Typically, older homes have plenty of open space within the roof for the new room. For post-1960s homes with W-shaped fink trusses, which fill up the loft, the conversion is more complicated. But by using supportive steel beams and inserting vertical stud walls, the W braces can be cut and trimmed to open up the area. »



ABOVE AND RIGHT A calm space was the request from the owners of a three-bedroom 1950s terrace in Blackheath, London. From Works converted the loft with a dormer extension to add a bedroom and en suite. White boarding links to the surrounding buildings (fromworks.co.uk)

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Obtaining permission

In most cases a loft conversion can be completed under permitted development (PD) rules, provided your project meets certain criteria. The volume allowed is 40 cubic metres for terraced houses and 50 cubic metres for detached and semi-detached houses, but if a previous owner has added to the roof space, this amount must be also be included within the volume. The PD rules are different if you live in flat or maisonette.

Under PD, materials must be similar in appearance to the existing house. No verandas, balconies or raised platforms are allowed. Some councils require matching materials such as slate roof tiles for the exterior, while others can be more flexible; check with the planning department at an early stage. You

The volume allowed is 40 cubic metres for terraced houses and 50 cubic metres for detached and semi-detached houses

may need full planning permission if you live in a conservation area or other designated area. For more details on what can be done under permitted development, click on the Planning Portal (planningportal.co.uk)

There's also a whole host of building regulations to comply with, including reinforcing the floor to take extra weight and adding sound insulation. Most important of all, you must meet fire-safety regulations. The loft cannot lead straight into an open-plan area below since a corridor is required as an escape route. Fire doors will be required and a mains fire alarm. If your home includes some open-plan areas, look into the possibility of including a sprinkler system.

If you're in a terraced or semi-detached house, you'll also need a party wall agreement with your neighbours. »





ABOVE AND LEFT Mansard extensions are not always permitted but when Lambeth Council relaxed the guidance, this Victorian townhouse gained a bedroom and bathroom on the new top storey, approached by a minimalist steel staircase. The architects at R2 Studio used breathable, recyclable wood-fibre insulation panels, which help keep the house cool in summer as well as protecting it from aircraft noise. At the same time, the lower floors were remodelled and a glass kitchen extension was added. The loft cost approximately £80,000 (r2studio.co.uk)

Standing tall

To avoid feeling cramped, the minimum head height at the highest point is 2.2 metres. Lower areas beneath the sloping sides can be used for a bed and storage. Building a dormer-style roof is a huge asset, giving good level head height to a major part of the room. If a new loft won't meet the minimum head height there are other ways and means to make it work, though they may be prohibitively expensive.

'Lowering the ceilings to the first floor to create more height in a loft adds cost to the build with new ceiling finishes and decoration to the rooms below, but it is a positive financial move since you can go further into the eaves, adding about 2.5 to four square metres of floor space,' says John Proctor.

If a new loft won't meet the minimum head height there are other ways and means to make it work, though they may be prohibitively expensive



Since this terraced Victorian home in south London unusually had two storeys to the front and three to the rear, a conventional roof extension would not have made any new usable space. Instead Proctor & Shaw lowered the high ceilings at the front of the building, turning the loft storage space into mezzanine-style deck space for two new bedrooms. The cost, including a rear extension, was £270,000 (proctorandshaw.com)



Staircase options

A new staircase takes up a surprising amount of space, eating into the floor area below, as well as the loft itself. The easiest method is positioning the flight directly above the existing stairs. 'In this case it should match in style, going and rise, whereas a connection in a different location gives the opportunity for a contemporary design,' says Mark Newman, director of Newman Zieglmeier Architecture, Design, Build (newmanzieglmeier.com).

With limited room, a narrow space-saving model with alternating treads or a spiral stair are options, though both have reduced access for furniture. »



THIS IMAGE, AND BELOW LEFT AND RIGHT Slotted together like a puzzle, this small-scale loft for a three-bedroom terraced Victorian home in Barnsbury, London, also provides office space for its home-working owner. Despite restrictions on altering the property's hipped roof, Con Form Architects convinced the planners with a neat dormer solution, achieving the headroom required with a stepped floor to the study.







STAYING EFFICIENT

Take an eco-friendly approach with this advice from **Kim Loddo**, director of architect **Inglis Badrashi Loddo** (ibla.co.uk)

- Reuse materials where possible. My practice has completed many projects where we kept parts of a roof, or recycled original roof tiles, trusses and floorboards. Carefully assess each element: can it be retained, repaired and adapted? If a complete replacement or redesign is needed then it should be done as sustainably as possible.
- Choose the best-performing glazing that your budget allows. The Window Energy Rating (WER) tells you how energy-efficient windows are. Options for double or triple glazing include inert gas between the panes and low-emissivity coatings to let in light and heat but reduce the amount of warmth that escapes.
- One of the most effective things you can do is increase the level of insulation. If you are retiling, add insulation over the existing structure to create a warm space. A good pitched roofing board, for example from Kingspan (kingspan.com) or Celotex (celotex.co.uk), should be paired with a breathable membrane installed over it and under the tiles. If you are not replacing the roof covering, install insulation between and under the rafters, and apply insulated plasterboard to provide a skimmable ceiling.
- Installing underfloor heating, either between or over existing joists, will increase the eco-efficiency of the space. Intelligent heating controls and draught-proofing may improve the environmental performance of the whole house.
- A simple skylight that can be opened over the stair will maximise airflow and create stack-effect natural cooling. This is a cost-effective, low-tech and eco-efficient element, optimising comfort and bringing light into the heart of the home.



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Bringing in light

The right windows will add individuality to your project, as well as light. 'The design is subject to your budget, the potential views, and the period of the property, together with planning limitations and potential light pollution,' says Mark Newman.

A dormer-style loft can include large expanses of glazing. Roof lights can be installed in impressive sizes, allowing sunshine to stream in. Opening windows must be more than 1.7 metres from the floor, but several can be banked, where just the top one will open. Select thermally efficient, UV-protective windows. Some have acoustic properties and frames can be ultra thin. There are conservation designs too, suitable for historic buildings. »

LEFT AND BELOW Proctor & Shaw transformed a three-bedroom Victorian terrace in Clapham, London, into a four-bedroom contemporary home with a loft extension providing a flexible room that could be a guest bedroom, gym or snug/cinema. The modern flat-backed full-width dormer was built under permitted development. Its £250,000 cost included a bedroom and en suite on the first floor and two further bathrooms (proctorandshaw.com)





Plumbing priorities

At the planning stage, consider the position of a bathroom or shower room, which should ideally be close to the soil stack to take sewage away. If not, you may need a pumped system. This is also the time to make decisions about moving a water tank, or about replacing the boiler to cope with extra radiators or underfloor heating. GD





TOP, ABOVE AND RIGHT When designing the dormer for this detached Edwardian house in Brondesbury, London, Newman Zieglmeier Architecture, Design, Build created a top floor bedroom suite with open yoga space, bathroom and dressing area. The shell cost £80,000 and the fit-out was £40,000 (newmanzieglmeier.com)

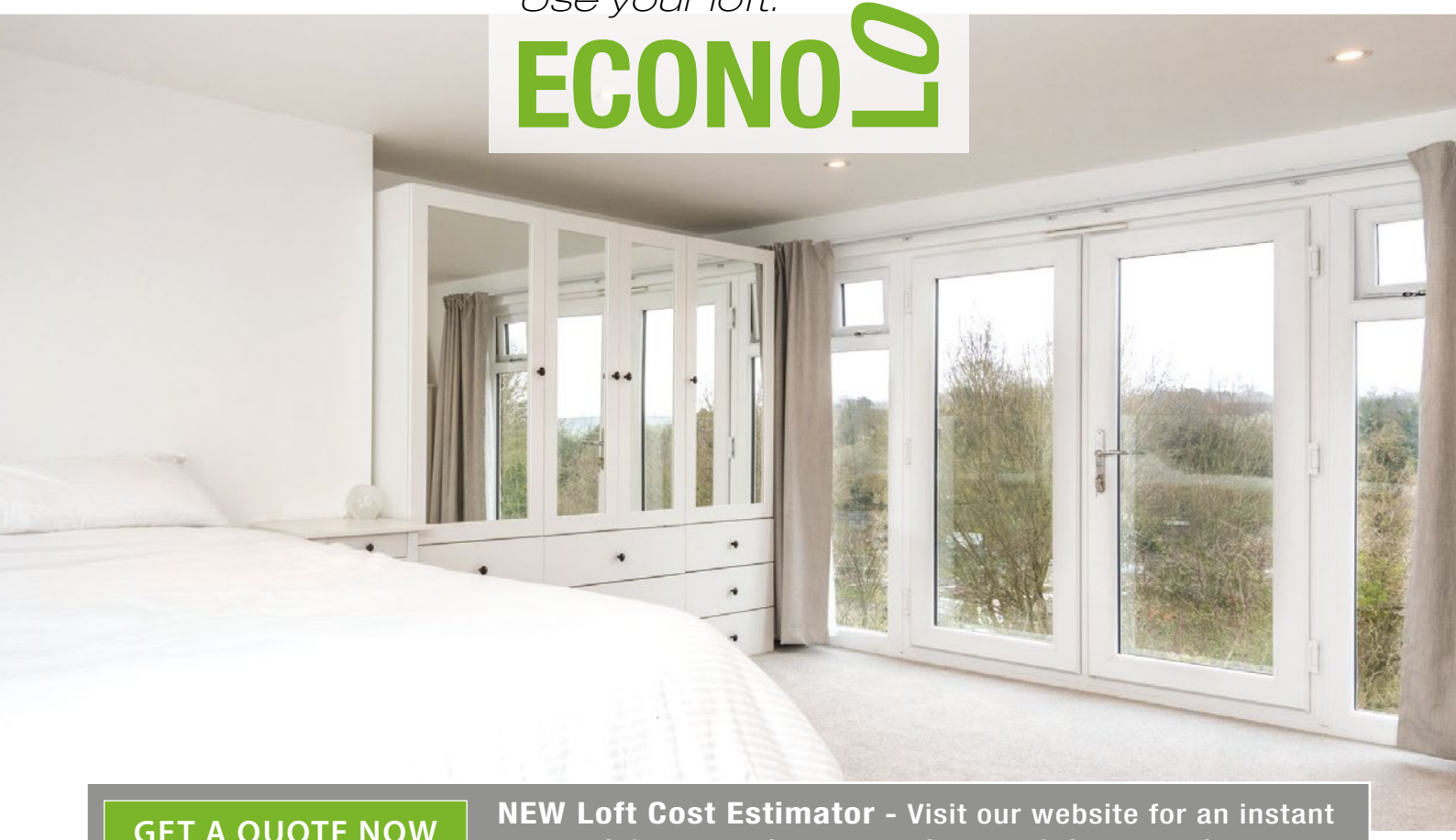
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FOCUS ON

Wood flooring

A timber floor is an eco-friendly investment that will last a lifetime

WORDS **ANDREA MANLEY**



These extra-wide 45cm Douglas fir planks have a traditional Scandinavian lye and white-soap finish. The wood has also been used to create a headboard and bed canopy. From £178 per sqm, Dinesen (dinesen.com)

Whether you want the natural appeal of solid boards, the modern versatility of engineered planks or the sustainable qualities of reclaimed wood, there are options for almost all spaces and every style of home. Whichever floor you choose, make sure any new wood product you buy is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)-certified to guarantee it's from a responsibly managed source. »



This solid-oak herringbone floor brings subtle texture to an open-plan scheme. Supplied untreated, the staves need to be oiled or lacquered on site. £91 per sqm, Junckers (junckers.co.uk)

PLANKS, BOARDS AND BLOCKS

Properly fitted and well-maintained solid-wood floors look glorious for many decades. And even when signs of wear and tear become too noticeable, the surface can be sanded back and refinished to look as good as new.

Hardwood species such as oak, walnut and teak are durable and scratch-resistant options for busy spaces. Softwoods such as Douglas fir, pine and larch are less robust but great for the dining area, upstairs landing and bedrooms.

Both planks and blocks can be supplied pre-finished or delivered untreated to be customised on site with the finish of your choice. Herringbone, chevron and geometric-block flooring can be used in spaces of any size. And wood blocks with square edges, create a seamless look, while traditional hand-rolled edges define each block, emphasising the pattern.

Prices depend on several factors, including the timber species, its grade (see box) and finish, but starts at around £45 per square metre for classic oak. Wide planks look luxurious but as the dimensions increase, so does the price.

> Properly fitted and well-maintained solid-wood floors look glorious for many decades

A MULTI-LAYERED APPROACH

Engineered boards have a top layer of solid wood that is bonded to several layers of softwood, which gives the floor great stability and allow it to cope with a certain amount of heat and humidity. Tongue and groove edges make the boards easy to fit together, and there are a variety of species and finishes available.

The depth of the hardwood top layer is a good indicator of quality; a greater depth allows the floor to be re-sanded if necessary and makes it look, sound and feel more like solid timber. Aim for at least a three millimetre-deep top layer. 'Sanding back isn't recommended with thicknesses less than three millimetres, but at anything between four to eight millimetres, it can be sanded several times over its life span,' says Peter Keane, director of The Natural Wood Flooring Company (naturalwoodfloor.co.uk).

Some engineered floors can be more expensive than solid timber, and you can expect to pay around £30 per square metre for budget lacquered oak.



ABOVE Black oak with a silvery grain is laid lengthwise to accentuate the room shape. Ollerton engineered plank, £64 per sqm, Ted Todd Fine Wood Floors (tedtodd.co.uk)



Prime grade oak has a uniform appearance with minimal knots and colour variation. Chateau engineered oak flooring in Extra White oil finish, £64 per sqm, Russwood (russwood.co.uk)

Antique timber that's been restored by hand is hard-wearing and has a beautifully aged look. Reclaimed engineered estate oak, from £294 per sqm, The New & Reclaimed Flooring Company (reclaimedflooringco.com)

SUPER SALVAGE

Reclaimed flooring, whether solid, engineered or block, has a sense of history and an aged patina that's difficult to replicate with new timber. And wood that's more than a century old is particularly suitable for high-traffic areas, as its tight grain is extremely durable.

'Choosing a reclaimed or antique floor is about a lot more than simply buying character,' says Robert Walsh, founder of Ted Todd Fine Wood Floors (tedtodd.co.uk). 'Doing so helps to preserve forests by decreasing the need for new timber and offsets the carbon footprint associated with producing a new floor.'

Usually salvaged from industrial buildings or large period houses, floors are commonly British or European oak and pine, but rarer species such as elm can also be found. Engineered reclaimed boards, where aged timber is bonded to a multilayer backing board, has all the benefits of a new product.

You'll pay a premium for flooring that's been restored and get a greater guarantee of quality working with a specialist reclamation supplier. Salvage yards are cheaper but work will be needed to bring the floor up to scratch. Expect to pay from around £40 per square metre for Victorian Baltic pine boards. »



CHARACTER REFERENCE

The grading system, explained by **Robert Walsh**, founder and owner of **Ted Todd Fine Wood Floors** (tedtodd.co.uk)

- Solid and engineered wood flooring is graded in accordance with the degree of visible natural variations, which you'll find identified in the product's description.
- Grading specifics vary between different retailers. Ted Todd has four grades: Prime, characterised by a uniform appearance with minimal knots, sap and shade variation, through to Select, Nature and Rustic, which has the greatest number of knots and colour variations.
- Choosing a grade will depend on your personal preference, whether a more pristine or rustic floor suits the style of your space and budget. Prime tends to be the most expensive.
- When deciding between different floors, comparing like-for-like grades will give you an idea of the best value option.



Hand-restored reclaimed dark colonial teak plank flooring has a unique patina. £297 per sqm, Ted Todd Fine Wood Floors' Rare Finds collection (tedtodd.co.uk)



Mafi-engineered larch is a durable softwood floor with a knotty appearance and distinctive grain. The brushed surface and deep white oiled finish of the boards offers sleek simplicity. £109 per sqm, Ark One (arkone.co.uk)

INSTALLATION BASICS

Engineered floors are more forgiving than solid timber when it comes to tolerating extremes of moisture and temperature variation. Laying solid wood over underfloor heating or in areas of high humidity is not recommended, whereas this is not such an issue for engineered boards. Nevertheless, always check with your flooring supplier before buying if you want a floor laid over underfloor heating or in a bathroom.

Before installation, the sub floor must be flat, smooth, stable and completely dry, while new-builds and renovated homes must be given time to allow plastered walls and concrete surfaces to dry out. And make sure the damp proofing of your home is sufficient and effective. GD



RIGHT Kahrs' Scandi premium oak oiled engineered flooring has a click lock fitting system for quick installation. £88 for a 2.8sqm pack, Lifestyle Floors (lifestyle-floors.co.uk)

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KITCHEN UPGRADE



Get the look

Renzo is a sustainable cabinet range from British manufacturer Daval. It's made from 100 per cent recycled materials in a choice of three textures – a Japanese charred timber effect, a character oak look and a raw concrete appearance with a hessian-style fabric finish giving a woven quality. The collection features a new accent colour, Hunter Green, industrial-style black handles and the tactile cabinets can be topped by luxurious white marble worksurfaces. From £10,000. (daval-furniture.co.uk)



Updated icon

Appliance brand Fisher & Paykel launched its world-first Double DishDrawer dishwasher more than 20 years ago. In its ninth generation, it's now available in black, as well as brushed stainless steel and anodised aluminium. With 15 wash programs, an eco option minimises water and energy use and each drawer can be run independently. £1,399. (fisherpaykel.com)

WORDS PAULA WOODS

Sleek space-saver

Abode has unveiled its slimmest and most affordable hot-water tap. Part of the Pronteau 3-in-1 range, the Prothia is designed for compact kitchens or second sinks and is available with a swan or quad spout, in a choice of five finishes including Brushed Brass, Chrome, Matt Black, Urban Copper and Brushed Nickel. It has a dual-stage safety handle and 98°C hot water is delivered via a cool-touch spout. From £599. (abode.eu)



Do the twist

Handcrafted in Cornwall as part of a sustainable homewares collection by lighting and furniture designer Tom Raffield, the Tor Twist Shelf showcases the brand's innovative steam bending technique. Formed from ash wood, each shelf twists in the centre and features three brushed brass-tipped coat pegs. It can be left or right aligned, measures L120OxW12OxH97mm and is finished in a natural oil blend. £295. (tomraffield.com)









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Beyond the barbecue

Prolong the joy of outdoor living with an outdoor kitchen built and equipped to use for more than just burgers in the height of summer

WORDS **PAULA WOODS**

Cooking and eating in the garden is no longer a matter of rustling up a few sausages on a portable grill. The wide range of outdoor cabinets, furniture and appliances allows for an almost infinite variety of design possibilities to suit every plot size and shape. Hi-tech fittings, all-weather materials and a quality design and build will ensure the space can be enjoyed for many months of the year, and for many years in the future. »



Perfect for a patio, this Röshults modular, freestanding kitchen system in 316 marine grade stainless steel with anthracite lacquer and sustainably sourced teak, consists of four modules. From £20,000, Kitchen Architecture (kitchenarchitecture.co.uk)

Practical pointers

Most outdoor kitchens will not require planning consent; the exceptions include homes that are listed or in a conservation area. 'Always seek advice from your local council to ensure you comply with the regulations, especially when it comes to the height of a permanent structure or garden building, and its proximity to nearby homes and any boundaries,' says Jacques Shelton, director at CENA (cenaoutdoor.co.uk). Also, bear in mind that building regulations may apply to some structures and services. Find out more at the Planning Portal (planningportal.co.uk).

Placing the kitchen close to your home makes it easy to move between the two spaces and may be the most cost-effective option, as construction elements such as relaying services is relatively straightforward. Going to the far reaches of the garden may reap the benefits of a great setting and views, but is also likely to be more costly, disruptive during construction and involve a longer walk to and from the house when in use.

Where possible, orientate the kitchen so that the risk of smoke drifting or blowing over the seating area and the neighbours is reduced. Most importantly, ensure adequate ventilation and clearance around flammable materials and any structure. »



ABOVE Created for a family garden in London, this bespoke kitchen by CENA consists of aluminium units and a glass-reinforced concrete worksurface, plus gas grill, wood-fired oven, sink and fridge. From £17,500 (cenaoutdoor.co.uk)



Designed to be set against a wall, this high-pressure laminate, freestanding unit features an integrated grill, outdoor fridge, storage and retractable workspace. Bespoke Forte Slimline kitchen, £32,500, Indian Ocean (indian-ocean.co.uk)



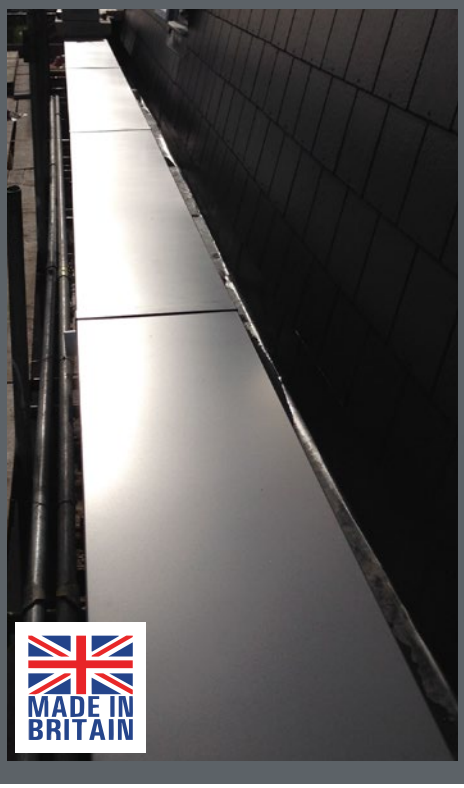
ABOVE Modular units allow for easy installation. Gaze Burvill's sustainable, all-weather units can be reconfigured or added to at a later date. A La Carte outdoor kitchens, from £15,000 (gazeburvill.com)

RIGHT Grillo's outdoor kitchens are designed to be easily configured to any size and shape of space, can be left outside all year round and the barbecues are supplied with covers. Outdoor kitchens start from around £10,000 (grillo.uk.com)



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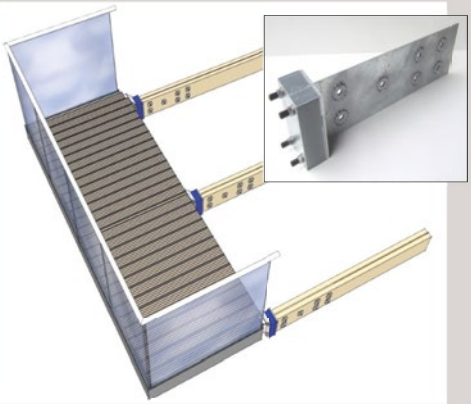
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This bespoke kitchen by award-winning garden designer Michael McGarr of Wigan-based Warnes McGarr & Co blends with its surroundings and features a remote-controlled louvre roof, Alfa wood-fired pizza oven and BeefEater gas barbecue. Part of a 500sqm luxury garden design that cost £250,000 (warnes-mcgarr.co.uk)

All in the design

When considering layout options, your chosen cooking methods, such as barbecue, pizza oven, grill plate, etc, how many people you'll cater for and seat, and the storage space needed will influence where everything goes. A degree of adaptabilty can be useful. 'Modular furniture that can be easily moved around allows the space to be reconfigured whenever the need arises,' suggests Cedric Wells, director at Vlaze (vlaze.co).

Outdoor furniture specialists, such as Gaze Burvill (gazeburvill.com), install modular units and appliances from around £15,000, and many can also provide a bespoke scheme. To keep costs down, off-the-shelf freestanding cabinets start from £150 each. Try Ikea (ikea.com). Alternatively, a competent DIYer would be able to build units from brick or timber.

But there are many reasons for seeking professional advice. Architects and garden designers are great at finding clever solutions to make the best of a site, and designing to complement local architecture and the landscape. Search the database of professionals local to you at the Royal Institute of British Architects (architecture.com), and the Society of Garden Designers (sgd.org.uk). »



Tasked with extending a terraced house in west London, architectural practice Neighbourhood Studio also remodelled the courtyard garden to create a seamless connection between the indoor and outdoor cooking areas (neighbourhood-studio.com)



ABOVE Most timber will require some form of maintenance to remain serviceable and weatherproof. Classic All Purpose Woodstain in Ebony, £35.99 per 2.5l, Shed & Fence All Weather Barrier in Grey Shadow, £30 per 2.5l, Sadolin (sadolin.co.uk)

Facing the elements

Cabinets, appliances and worksurfaces must be robust, waterproof, flame-resistant and impervious to frost damage. Sealed concrete, brick, stone, stainless steel, rust-free vitreous enamel by Vlaze and sintered stone, such as Dekton (cosentino.com), are durable, all-weather materials. Hardwoods such as oak, iroko and tigerwood are also good options. All kitchen furniture that remains outside year round will benefit from being covered up during the worst weather.

Non-slip, easy-care flooring such as exterior grade porcelain tiles, sealed stone or timber planks are all good choices, although decking does need on-going maintenance and food can fall between the boards.

Incorporate some form of overhead shelter into your scheme to shield against sunlight and showers. Options include a pergola, solid-roof structure or automated louvre system, such as IQ's Umbris (iqglassuk.com), which allows you to control ventilation and shading. Building walls or partitions provides a barrier against blustery winds but adequate ventilation will need to be factored in to the plans at the design stage. »





ABOVE Porcelain tiles are a durable and slip-resistant surface. PorcelPave Cuba, 80x80cm, cement-effect porcelain paving in Anthracite, from £39.94 per sqm, The London Tile Co (londontile.co.uk)

LEFT Incorporating shelter and shade allows for extended alfresco dining. The Morsø Forno Hut includes a cast-iron oven, prep area, wood store, bar tops and seating. Measuring H2.75xW1.5xL2.5m, it can be custom made on request. From £5,995 (morsoe.com)

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Equipped for success

There are an increasing number of appliances suitable for outdoor food preparation, storage and cooking, but always buy models that are guaranteed for use outside.

A generous barbecue, plus pizza oven, will suffice for many, but high-end extras include rotisseries, smokers, teppanyaki plates, and tandoori and ceramic ovens. Opting for a wood-fired oven and a charcoal or propane cylinder barbecue may negate the need for a gas or electrical supply. But for convenience and comfort in the long-term, relaying gas, water and electrics is well worth considering.

'A big sink and fridge to keep everything fresh is essential,' says Tom Curtis, creative manager at Indian Ocean (indian-ocean.co.uk).

If you are short on space, hybrid barbecues provide heating and cooking in one. Try Chesneys' heater barbecues (chesneys.co.uk) and the Forno oven by Morsø (morsoe.com). Wall-mounted barbecues are available from Focus (focus-fireplaces.com), while Gozney's Roccbox (gozney.com) is a tabletop pizza oven that's fired by wood or gas.

● ***Turn to p124 to read the case study of on outdoor kitchen***



ABOVE This vitreous enamel and stainless-steel range can be left outside all year round and updated over time thanks to its interchangeable panels. Adapt modular and freestanding kitchen units, from £2,495, Vlaze (vlaze.co)

BELOW Gaze Burvill's outdoor collection includes gas grills, burners, teppanyaki grills, sinks, fridges, wood-fired barbecues, and pizza and ceramic ovens. From £15,000 (gazeburvill.com)





GETTING CONNECTED

Michael McGarr, garden designer at **Warnes McGarr & Co**, on utilities rules (warnes-mcgarr.co.uk)

- If you're using a landscape-design consultant, they should have a pool of specialists to install outdoor water, electricity and gas supplies, and can ensure all relevant certificates are received.
- You can source registered professionals via recognised organisations, such as the Gas Safe Register (gassafe register.co.uk), Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering (ciphe. org.uk) and National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC) (niceic.com).
- Mains water is required for outdoor sinks and water coolers in outdoor refrigerators. Blue MDPE water pipes will need to be laid in a trench at a depth of at least 750mm but no more than 1,350mm from finished ground level, and at least 350mm from other utilities, such as gas and electricity.
- Electricity is often the cleanest fuel and most versatile way to power outdoor appliances, lighting and even heating. Electrical work in the garden is no longer covered by Part P of the building regulations in England.
- Electric cables must be buried underground at a sufficient depth to avoid damage from garden tools. In addition, outside sockets need to be RCD-protected for safety, and extra care taken to ensure structures are completely waterproof. The NICEIC and Elecsa (elecsa.co.uk) also recommend an electrical inspection every ten years.
- Natural gas for cooking and heating is clean and reliable but often the most tricky and expensive fuel to install at mains level. Despite the initial outlay, I recommend it for ease of use. Gas service pipes should be laid with a minimum depth cover of 375mm in private ground and 450mm in footpaths and driveways.

PHOTOGRAPHY PETER LANDERS



This bespoke block and render kitchen was designed around the family's gas barbecue. The doors are BeefEater stainless steel (beefeaterbbq.com)

Local hot spot

Weather-resistant materials and a cosy fireplace contribute to a space that can be used even when it gets a little chilly

WORDS **PAULA WOODS**

PROJECT PROFILE

LOCATION South London
STYLE OF PROPERTY Detached house built in 2001
DURATION OF BUILD 4 months
SIZE 365sqm
COST £80,000

After living in their six-bedroom home for two years, Bethan, 47, and Marc Kemp, 45, were ready to make better use of their garden. The couple, who have two children, Edie, 15, and Grace, 13, wanted to create a multifunctional set-up that could include a trampoline, fitness studio and serve as an extension of the living space inside the house.

Bethan and Marc had seen the work of garden designer Cassandra Crouch (cassandracrouch.co.uk) at a friend's house and were impressed. 'We were taken with the outdoor living area and the clever way planting was used to create distinct zones,' says Bethan.

Cassandra suggested their design focus should be around a terrace built close to the house, but just far enough away to avoid being shaded by the building. A stone-clad fireplace and strategically placed beech hedging provides screening from the sunken trampoline, mini putting green and the fitness studio.

'We didn't want to be stuck inside cooking when friends and family are over, so we also have an outdoor kitchen,' says Bethan. The







'We were taken with the outdoor living area and the clever way planting was used to create distinct zones'

bespoke design was built on site and incorporates the couple's gas barbecue.

Constructed from weather-resistant block and render, the kitchen includes a frost-proof granite worksurface, while the floor is robust, non-slip paving that complements the exterior of the house. Cassandra further enhanced the relationship between the family's home and its outdoor space in the design of the fireplace. 'It's aligned with a large glass door at the centre of the property, to create a pull into the garden and provide a focal point from both inside and out,' she explains.

The kitchen is at the heart of the family's new multipurpose garden. 'The terrace really makes the space,' says Bethan. 'We love being able to cook outdoors, and the fireplace is fantastic when the evenings get cooler.' GD

TOP Next to the kitchen is a seating area and a dining table with room for up to eight people. The sawn Grey Yorkstone floor is from London Stone (londonstone.co.uk)

ABOVE The freestanding fireplace is clad in silver quartzitic slate from Island Stone (islandstone.co.uk) and includes a bioethanol-fuelled EcoSmart firebox insert (ecosmartfire.co.uk)


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Fluid states

Worksurface manufacturer Cosentino (cosentino.com) has launched Dekton Liquid, a collection of durable sintered stone created in collaboration with designers Anna Murray and Grace Winteringham of Patternity (patternity.org). In off-white, Liquid Shell is subtly patterned, Liquid Sky, pictured, has a swirling design, while Liquid Embers is a carbon-like hue. From £450 per sqm.



Eco innovation

Portuguese manufacturer Granorte is rewriting the rules of bathroom design with its sustainable cork baths and basins. Each piece is honed from a block of cork made using waste material from the stopper industry. The products benefit from a high level of insulation against heat loss. NuSpa bath from £8,757, freestanding basin from £709. (granorte.co.uk)



Delicate flower

A recent addition to the London Basin Company's range is Angelica, a white porcelain countertop model with a petal groove pattern and fine gold rim that's understated and elegant. As each basin is handcrafted, no two will be exactly the same as slight colour and pattern differences occur during production. Diameter 46.5cm, height 17.5cm. £900. (londonbasincompany.com)



Take a turn



Retailer Alternative Bathrooms (alternativebathrooms.com) has introduced Clip, a new heated towel radiator from Italian company Brem (bremradiators.com). Made from robust steel tubing and resembling a torsion spring, it is available in 50, 130 or 175cm lengths, and 80 gloss, satin and metallic colours. It can be installed vertically or horizontally. From £699.

Bespoke effect

Luxury meets industrial styling with Dogma by Aqua, Ideagroup's new bathroom furniture collection. Featuring handleless doors, the versatile range combines tall, base and wall units with open and closed storage compartments. Available in a number of opulent finishes such as Carrara and Grafite marble, as well as soft-touch lacquers; you can also choose a built-in solid-surface washbasin. Dogma vanity and wall units in Rovere and Gres Statuario, £POA, from CP Hart. (cphart.co.uk)



WORDS PAULA WOODS

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Therapy room

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WORDS **PAULA WOODS**

Having a space where you can escape everyday life to rejuvenate your body and mind has great value in this frenetic world. The plethora of massage showers, whirlpool baths, steam cabins and saunas tap into a desire for a multipurpose bathroom with therapeutic benefits. Designing a scheme with high-performance fittings that are a pleasure to use and that look good too, is a balancing act between function and aesthetics. »



Despite its slim 55mm rim, this freestanding bath can be fitted with almost invisible integrated air jets, LED coloured light and sound. Vero Air bath, from £1,182, with C1 mixer tap and shower, £2,546, Duravit (duravit.co.uk)

Space and budget

Whether renovating your bathroom or building a new one, take time to decide exactly which features you want. You may need to prioritise a wish list, taking into account the size of the room and your budget limitations. Massage showers, whirlpools, steam cabins and saunas are pricey and you'll also need to factor in the cost of installing adequate services, ventilation and drainage.

What about access? Will the spa bath you have your heart on fit through doorways and up the stairs? And is the bathroom floor robust enough to support it safely?

If you are renovating and want to invest in a luxurious scheme but your bathroom is small, consider stealing space from an adjacent room, corridor or landing. Changing the position of pipework and the soil pipes may also free-up space and give you greater flexibility with the layout but moving the soil pipe will add to the cost of the project. »





ABOVE This all-in-one steam generator, with colour and aromatherapy, can be fitted in any shower, and only requires an 80-100mm cavity for installation. Effe Effegibi Touch&Steam generator, £POA, available at CP Hart (cphart.co.uk)

LEFT Effe's range of Turkish-style hammam steam rooms can be bought as complete standalone systems or you can design your own by choosing from a wide range of steam generators. £POA (effe.it)



A retailer with a bespoke design service can offer advice on installation, as well as specifying products to meet your brief. Gessi iSpa shower spout, from £2,288, hand shower, from £207, hand shower bracket and water outlet, £366, shower valves from £928, available at CP Hart (cphart.co.uk)

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A stud wall helps divide this room and hides the pipework for twin showers. Aquablade round slimline wall-mounted head, £610, Kovera two-outlet thermostatic valve, £675, extended mono basin mixer, £390, Vado (vado.com)

Water management

Having an efficient plumbing and drainage system is crucial. 'The first thing to check is the water heating and pressure capabilities,' says Adam Logan, training manager at Grohe UK (grohe.co.uk). 'Multi-jet showers often require high pressure, without which you could end up with something that looks great but performs poorly.'

A system that allows for adequate removal of waste water is also a necessity. 'A shower waste should have a greater flow-rate than the head,' adds Adam. 'And the drain of a steam fitting is best placed next to, but not directly below, the generator.'

As the installation of hi-spec fittings can be complex, seek out firms with relevant skills and experience. Search the database of registered professionals at the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering (ciphe.org.uk) and National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (niceic.com). Alternatively, hire a specialist bathroom design company to manage all aspects of the project. »



This amazingly luxurious horizontal shower includes six WaterBars and is operated using central controls integrated in the head area of the heatable recliner. Choose a signature treatment with the touch of a button for relaxation or revitalisation. £POA, Dornbracht (dornbracht.com)



A curving tub shape ensures maximum bathing comfort. Terrassa oval freestanding bath, from £3,215, Victoria + Albert Baths (vandabaths.com)

PHOTOGRAPHY ISADORA FABIAN

When designed to fully enclose a showering area, Aqata's bespoke screens can be used to create a shower and steam room in one. SP470 bespoke shower screen, from £1,467 (aqata.co.uk)



Sintered-stone surfaces are extremely durable, and both stain and scratch-resistant. Use on walls and floors for a cohesive finish. Dekton Helena, from £450 per sqm, Cosentino (cosentino.com)

Get the spa effect

By definition, a multifunctional bathroom can serve different activities and change ambience from day to night. Creating a well co-ordinated scheme is the key to achieving this feat in the relaxed style of a luxurious spa. Avoid cramming the space with overtly hi-tech gadgetry and keep the materials and colour palette limited to promote a sense of calm. Incorporate plenty of storage so that everything is easily accessible and has its own place, reducing clutter to a minimum. Add a touch of

> Avoid overtly hi-tech gadgetry and keep the materials and colour palette limited to promote a sense of calm

glamour by including a statement light fitting to supplement practical recessed spotlights, operated via a dimmer switch or remote control, or fit a marble countertop on a vanity unit.

To make the room even more inviting, bring in a stool, armchair or even a chaise longue. And there are few things more welcoming and soothing on a chilly evening than stepping onto a cosy tiled floor warmed by underfloor heating.

If there's space, ease pressure at busy times, like the morning rush, by fitting twin basins and vanity cabinets, or even an enclosure with two showers. ››



Designed to relax muscles, stimulate the circulation and ease pressure on joints, this trapezoidal-shaped tub can be fitted with one of five whirl systems, and has room for two people, side by side. Paiova 5 whirlpool bath, £11,128, Duravit (duravit.co.uk)



A SOFTER SIDE

Add extra comfort with upholstered furniture, says **Roselind Wilson** of **Roselind Wilson Design** (roselindwilsondesign.com)

- Select water-resistant outdoor fabrics that are designed to withstand moisture and can be easily cleaned. Though resilient, these textiles are soft to the touch and there is a huge selection of patterns and colours to choose from. Suppliers include Perennials. (perennialsfabrics.com)
- For ready-made pieces, weather-resilient furniture shrugs off humidity and changes in temperature. Coco Wolf has a wide range of outdoor upholstered furniture, including bespoke items. (cocowolf.co.uk)
- Making sure the space is well ventilated will minimise any risk of mould and mildew, by allowing fabric to air and dry.
- Softwood timber frames swell and warp in high humidity and heat. Look for more durable species such as teak or iroko. Due to its toughness, bamboo is also a good option.

Feel the benefit

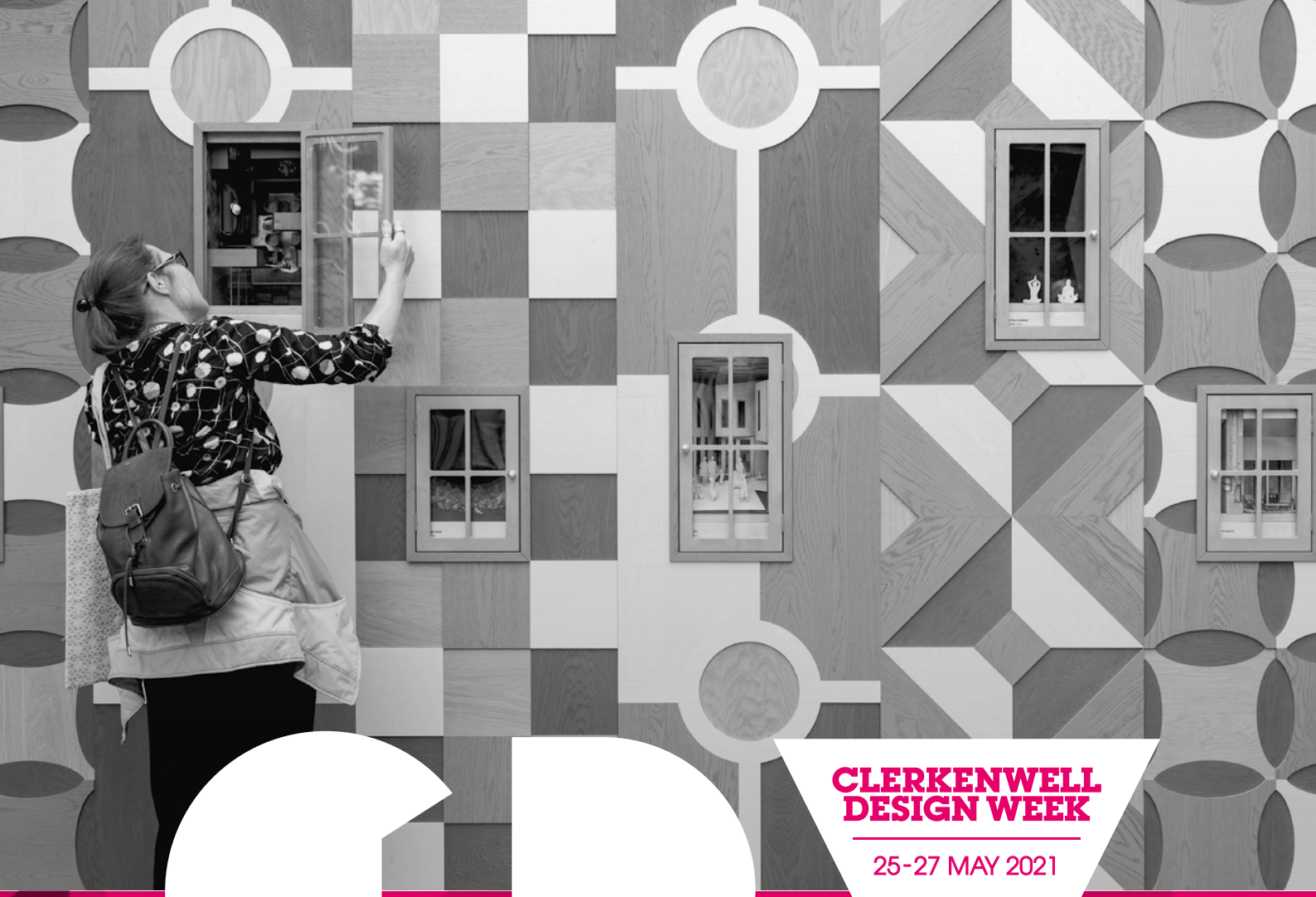
Designed to create a sense of wellbeing, home spa fittings combine sophisticated technology with ease of use and the precision of digital control.

The spray strength and patterns of hydrotherapy showers work to ease tired muscles. Advanced systems, such as the Aquamoon by Dornbracht (dornbracht.com) and RainTunes from Hansgrohe (hansgrohe.co.uk), also include coloured light, sound and fragrance for a multisensory experience.

Hydro massage baths can soothe or revive and some models include light and sound. The versatile Sound Wave system from Kaldewei (kaldewei.co.uk) can be fitted and retrofitted to any of its baths. And if you suffer with stiff, aching joints, the Flotation Tub from Toto (toto.com) is designed to relieve pressure for complete relaxation. GD



Hansgrohe's RainTunes offers multisensory wellbeing thanks to a mix of choreographed water, soundscapes, lighting, fragrances and images on a screen. £POA (hansgrohe.co.uk)



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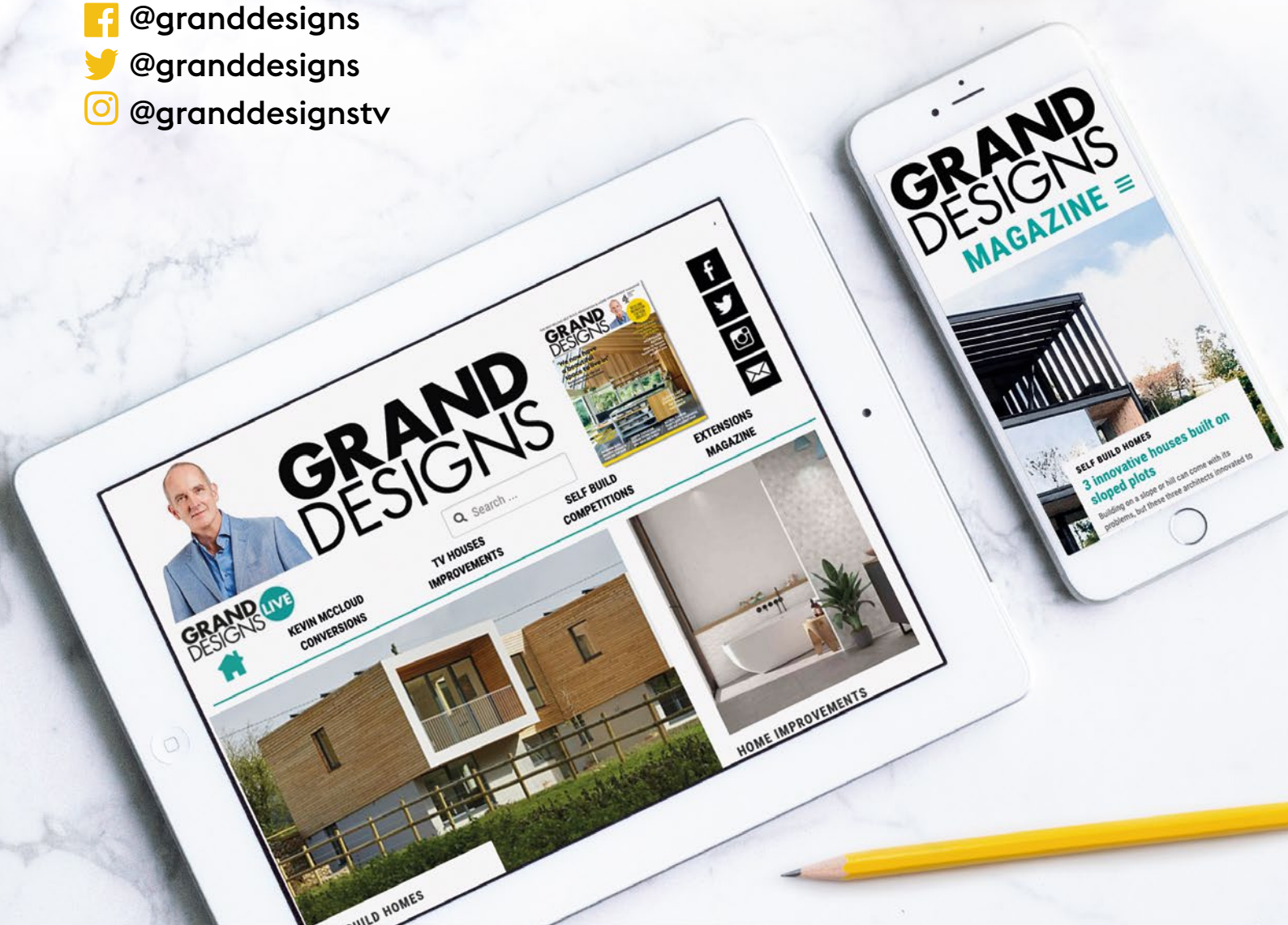
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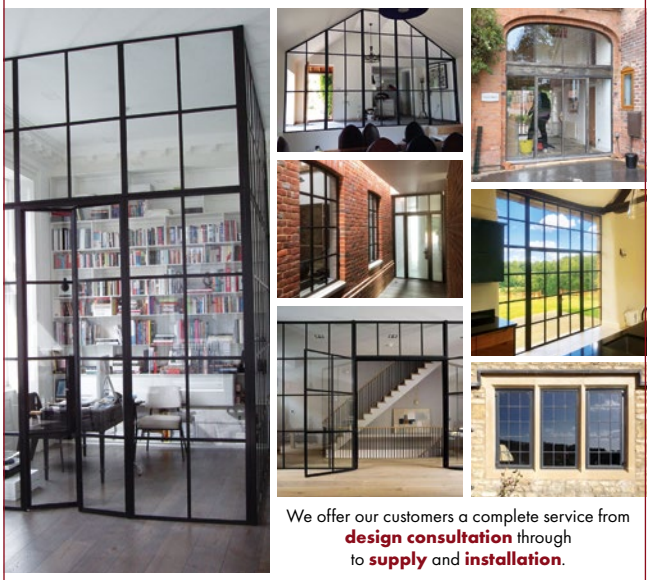
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MY GRAND IDEA

A snug with its own staircase lifts this extension out of the ordinary, as architect Adam Knibb explains

Tell us how this project came about

My clients, Donna and Brian Malone, asked me to design a rear extension that included a first-floor snug for their two-bedroom Victorian semi-detached home in Warsash, Hampshire. They occasionally work from home, so the room had to serve as both a study and relaxed reading nook with views of the garden.

— Why not go for a bigger extension?

Donna and Brian were more interested in the way the snug, which is 9.3 square metres, relates to the Victorian house and wanted the ground-floor extension to replace and expand on a conservatory and an infill utility room. The project cost £115,000 and neither the brief nor the budget allowed for a larger addition.

— Any hiccups with the planning process?

We sought pre-application advice to test the waters, which is useful when proposing a more unusual scheme. The initial feedback was very good and we managed to address concerns, such as the impact on neighbouring properties due to overlooking or loss of light by using 3-D modelling to present the proposal from a variety of different viewpoints.

— What were the challenges?

Since the height of the building's gable end set a fixed-height parameter, we had to calculate the ground and ceiling levels from the top down. The extension floor was excavated and there are steps down to it from the original part of the house. This creates a subtle transition between new and old spaces and helped us gain as much head room as possible in the snug.





ABOVE A folded steel staircase with mesh balustrade, which leads up to the snug, ties in with the exterior Corten cladding

LEFT Corten-steel cladding contrasts with brushed zinc on the first floor. Robin Day Polo Skid chair, from the Polo chair collection, £99, Loft Furniture (loft.co)

— The exterior cladding is striking

It gives the new-build an industrial look that reflects the maritime history of Warsash. Corten steel weathers to an attractive patina and its robustness enabled us to create a continuous facade covering the walls and sections of the roof seamlessly. The snug is defined by its brushed-zinc cladding.

— And the staircase?

It was an opportunity to bring some of the industrial aspects inside, hence the single piece of treated steel that is folded to create the stair. Markings from its manufacture were retained and the mesh balustrade infill mimics the rust colour of the Corten cladding. GD

Adam Knibb Architects (adamknibbarchitects.com)

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